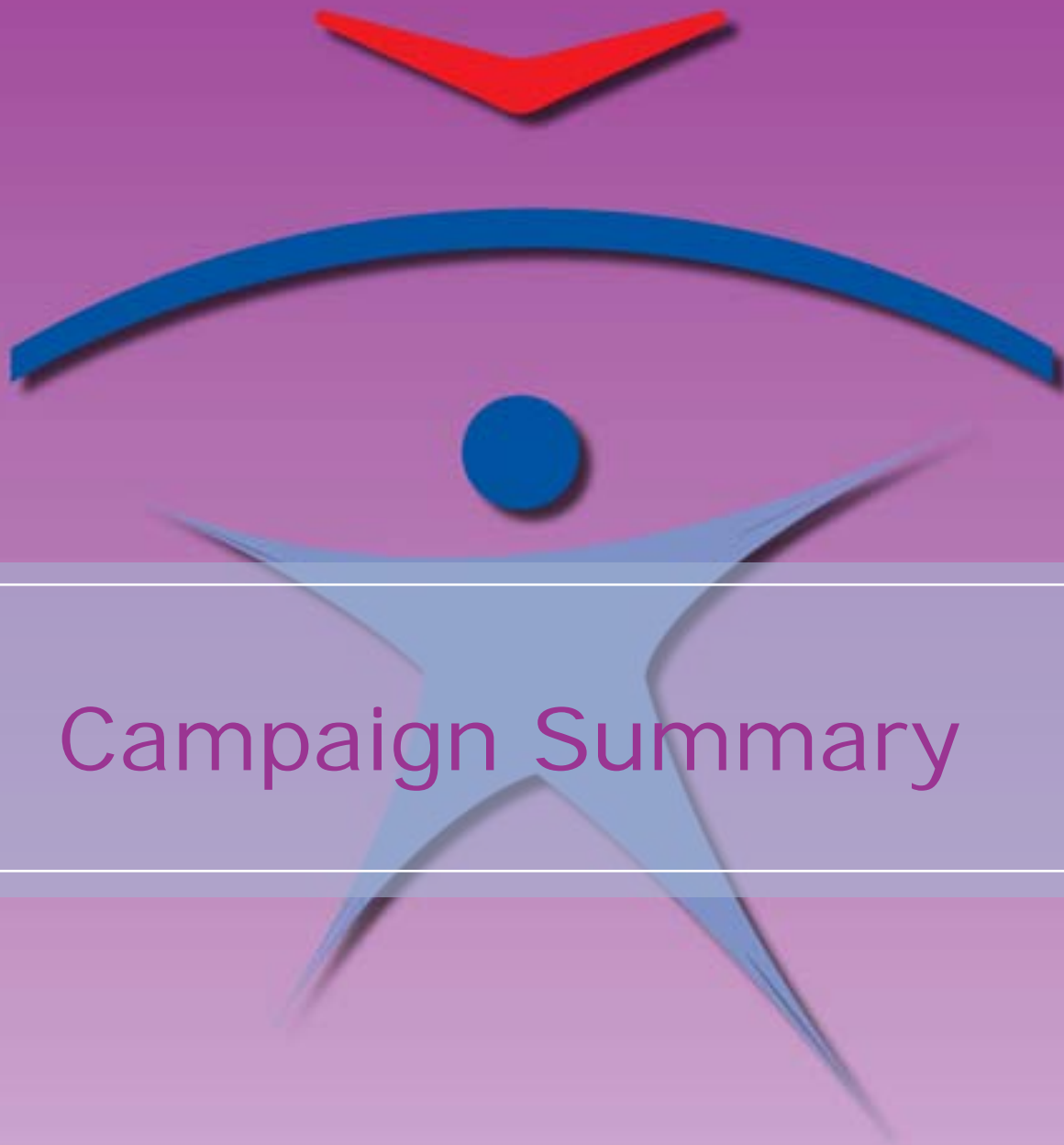


A EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN ON RISK ASSESSMENT



Campaign Summary

HEALTHY WORKPLACES

GOOD FOR YOU. GOOD FOR BUSINESS.

<http://hw.osha.europa.eu>



Table of contents

1.	Background.....	3
1.1	The importance of risk assessment.....	3
1.2	Risk assessment – the key to healthy workplaces.....	4
1.3	Legal background.....	5
2.	Healthy Workplaces: Good for you. Good for business. A European campaign on Risk Assessment.....	5
2.1	Context.....	5
2.2	Campaign objectives.....	6
2.3	Campaign strategy.....	6
2.4	Campaign calendar.....	7
2.5	Campaign material.....	8
2.6	How to get involved?.....	9
2.7	Certificate of Participation and Partner Offer.....	9
3.	Risk assessment – facts & figures.....	10
3.1	Around Europe.....	10
3.2	The five-step approach.....	12
4.	Case studies.....	12
4.1	Severe chemical accident.....	12
4.2	Fatal accidents in farming.....	13
4.3	Repetitive strain injuries (RSI).....	13
5.	Good practice examples.....	13
5.1	Eliminating the risk.....	13
5.2	Reduce noise, reduce dust.....	14
6.	Further links.....	15
7.	About the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.....	15

1. Background

1.1 The importance of risk assessment

Everybody has an interest in keeping workers safe and healthy. And most work-related accidents and illnesses are preventable. But how?

Risk assessment is the first step

Risk assessment is the start of the risk management process. It enables employers to understand the action that they need to take to improve workplace health and safety, as well as productivity.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has developed a European-wide information campaign focusing on risk assessment. The campaign addresses high risk sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) especially.

Since the adoption of the European framework directive in 1989, risk assessment has become a familiar concept for organising prevention in the workplace, and hundreds of thousands of companies all over Europe assess their risks regularly.

Nevertheless, the below figuresⁱ regarding accidents and illness at work show that improvements are needed. Every year, millions of people in the EU are injured at work, or have their health seriously harmed in the workplace.

▶ **Every three-and-a-half minutes, somebody in the EU dies from work-related causes. This means almost 167,000 deaths a year as a result of either work-related accidents (7,500) or occupational diseases (159,500).**

▶ **Every four-and-a-half seconds, a worker in the EU is involved in an accident that forces him/her to stay at home for at least three working days. The number of accidents at work causing three or more days of absence is huge, with over 7 million every year.**

Moreover, accidents and illness at work are **costly**.

▶ Human cost for workers and their families: behind these statistics are real people, each with their own story, as shown in the case studies in section 4.

▶ Cost for organisations: when things go wrong at work, it affects business productivity and costs arise from occupational accidents and illnesses, increased rates of sick leave and turnover, and a less motivated workforce.

- ➡ Cost for government: accidents and illness place a huge burden on healthcare systems.

Proper risk assessment can provide a number of **business benefits**:

- ➡ The creation of safe working conditions enables companies to cut costs arising from occupational accidents and illness.
- ➡ Proper risk assessment helps to reduce rates of sick leave, and insurance costs come down with fewer claims.
- ➡ More highly motivated workers are more productive and efficient, and staff turnover rates fall. This all helps businesses become more competitive.

1.2 Risk assessment – the key to healthy workplaces

Risk assessment is the cornerstone of the European approach to occupational safety and health and there are good reasons for this. If risks are not assessed or properly dealt with, a suitable risk management process cannot be started and appropriate preventive measures are unlikely to be put in place. Systematic risk assessment therefore improves workplace safety and health and business performance in general.

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating risks to workers' safety and health from workplace hazards. It is a systematic examination of all aspects of work that considers:

- ➡ what could cause injury or harm,
- ➡ whether the hazards could be eliminated and, if not,
- ➡ what preventive or protective measures are, or should be, in place to control these risks.

When a risk is identified, the first thing to consider is
whether the risk can be eliminated.
If this is not possible,
risks should be controlled.

1.3 Legal background

Employers have the general duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work. Risk assessment enables employers to take the measures necessary to protect the safety and health of their workers.

Risk assessment is a legal requirement since the adoption of the Framework directive 89/391ⁱⁱ. This directive highlights the key role played by risk assessment and sets out basic provisions that must be followed by every employer. Member States, however, have the right to enact more stringent provisions to protect their workers.

More information about risk assessment:

<http://osha.europa.eu/topics/riskassessment>

2. Healthy Workplaces: Good for you. Good for business. A European campaign on Risk Assessment

2.1 Context

In 2004, a communication of the European Commissionⁱⁱⁱ on the practical implementation of the Framework directive 89/391 and its five first individual directives was issued. The paper underlined the need to spread the task of risk assessment. It also highlighted the need to improve the implementation and the quality of risk assessment.

- The tasks in risk assessment, documentation and supervision are not universally spread, including in Member States with a tradition based on prevention.
- Risk assessment is often considered a 'one-off' action and is not sustained.
- Risks are not analysed and evaluated collectively. As a result, separate measures are being put in place, but there is no integrative approach for the analysis of the conditions in the workplace.
- In the course of conducting superficial risk assessments the focus is put on identifying obvious and immediate risks; long-term effects such as those caused by chemicals are being neglected.
- Psychosocial risks and work organisation factors are rarely considered in risk assessment.
- The efficiency of the measures taken is not sufficiently supervised by employers.

2.2 Campaign objectives

Risk assessment can be a challenge, especially for small and medium-sized businesses, but it need not be so. The objectives of the Risk Assessment campaign are to:

- **raise awareness** of the legal responsibility and the importance and practical need to assess risks in the workplace. Risk assessment is not an objective in itself, but a powerful tool for identifying the need for preventive measures,
- **demystify the process** and show, especially to SMEs, that risk assessment is not necessarily complicated, bureaucratic, or a task only for experts,
- **promote a five-step approach** to risk assessment (see the section 3.2),
- **encourage enterprises** to carry out their risk assessment in-house, if there is competent personnel in the workplace,
- highlight the fact that risk assessment is an **ongoing process** and not just a one-off obligation,
- underline the fact that **quality counts** (and that it is important to document, monitor and review the risk assessment),
- promote participatory risk assessment, **the involvement of everyone** in the workplace in assessing the risks, and
- **promote good practices** which are transferable and help make the process easier.

The ultimate aim, of course, is to help to reduce the number of people who are being hurt or are experiencing ill health as a result of their work, now and in the future.

2.3 Campaign strategy

Starting with the Risk Assessment campaign (2008-2009), EU-OSHA is moving to **a two-year campaign cycle** for the first time. The move is intended to make the campaigns more effective in achieving the objectives of the Community Strategy for Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012.

By extending the European Week Campaign to run over a two-year period, more time for preparation and follow-up is allowed, including the planning of the campaign strategy and the commissioning of new campaign materials and their translation, production and distribution.

The success of the campaign depends on the active support and collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders and campaign partners, including EU-OSHA's focal points, which are usually the national health and safety authorities in the different Member States. Therefore, the new model has an increased focus on **network-based campaigning**. This also gives more time for follow-up, especially the promotion of good practices, and to develop partnerships.

The campaign is also designed to engage a wide range of businesses and organisations to get the key messages across to their suppliers, contractors and neighbours and to encourage them to participate. Large enterprises in particular have an interest in helping the smaller ones in their supply chains, working together to share experience and expertise.

The campaign has the backing of the EU Presidencies of Slovenia and France in 2008 and Czech Republic and Sweden in 2009, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Social Partners.

2.4 Campaign calendar

2008

13 June	Campaign launch with European Commission and Slovenian EU Presidency in Brussels
20-26 October	European Week for Safety and Health at Work (Calendar Week 43)
3-4 November	FITS (Forum International Travail Santé) with French EU Presidency
Nov./Dec.	Evaluation of national good practice nominees submitted to EU level

The European Weeks are annual series of events that take place in all EU member states, promoting improved safety and health in the workplace. They are open to everyone with an interest in this area.

The campaign also features Good Practice Awards, which recognise companies and organisations that have made outstanding contributions in promoting risk assessment in the workplace. Throughout 2008, Good Practice Awards are organised at national and European level.

2009

Feb./March	Conference and Good Practice Awards with Czech EU Presidency
Feb.-Sept.	Topic based activities; local and sector focus
19-25 October	European Week for Safety and Health at Work (Calendar Week 43)
Oct./Nov.	Conference with Swedish EU Presidency
November	Closing event of the campaign

After the announcement of the Good Practice Award winners, their examples will be promoted throughout 2009.

2.5 Campaign material

All campaign material is available in 22 EU languages and can be downloaded free of charge from the campaign website:

<http://hw.osha.europa.eu>

These materials include

- ▶▶▶▶ posters and leaflets
- ▶▶▶▶ factsheets
- ▶▶▶▶ powerpoint presentations
- ▶▶▶▶ good practice case studies
- ▶▶▶▶ quizzes
- ▶▶▶▶ animations featuring the popular cartoon character Napo
- ▶▶▶▶ tips on how to organise and manage activities during the European Week
- ▶▶▶▶ Partners and Events sections
- ▶▶▶▶ links to resources on related sites

and much more...

The site also gives access to risk assessment tools by sector and hazard, to help with the practical aspects of carrying out risk assessments.

All this material is available for free for organisations to use, and to distribute among their stakeholders and partners.

During the campaign there will be press conferences and other media activities to help publicise the importance of risk assessment.

2.6 How to get involved?

EU-OSHA's aim is to encourage individuals and organisations of all sizes to get involved in the campaign, and to organise their own events and activities during the European Weeks or at any other moment during the campaign.

Anyone can take part:

- employers – public and private sector – including SMEs
- managers, supervisors and workers
- trade unions and safety representatives
- safety and health institutions
- OSH professionals and practitioners
- Regional and local OSH prevention and insurance services.

They can get involved by organising

- safety demonstrations, displays and exhibitions
- training events, seminars and workshops
- poster competitions and quizzes
- advertising and promotion campaigns
- partnerships between enterprises and education and training centres
- 'good neighbour' schemes between large and small employers, suggestion schemes
- hazard spotting
- inspection days.

For more information on events and how to get involved, get in touch with the focal point in your country – contact details can be found on EU-OSHA's website. http://osha.europa.eu/about/partners/focal_points/

For organisations planning their own events for the European Week, our website provides examples of good practice, as well as forums for sharing ideas, giving feedback, and finding out what other people are doing.

2.7 Certificate of Participation and Partner Offer

EU-OSHA wants to establish partnerships that benefit all parties and has put in place a number of channels and actions to give visibility to campaign partners and promote their contributions and campaign activities.

- **You help us** to raise awareness of risk assessment and give visibility to the Healthy Workplaces campaign.
- **We give you** visibility as a campaign partner and as an organisation dedicated to occupational safety and health.

There are two levels of involvement and recognition:

- **Certificate of Participation** for active involvement in one of the national or European activities.
- The **Partner Offer** goes further and provides an opportunity to benefit from an extensive range of promotion and to raise your profile in the OSH community and beyond through the high visibility of the Healthy Workplaces campaign. It is reserved for those engaging substantially in the campaign and multiplying their efforts through their network members (through the organisation of their own events, conferences or competitions; campaign promotion on website; distribution of campaign materials etc).

For more information on these offers, check the Partner section on the campaign website: <http://hw.osha.europa.eu/partners>

3. Risk assessment – facts & figures

3.1 Around Europe

Risks are successfully assessed in companies of different sizes all around Europe. However, the empirical data below shows that there is still room for improvement, especially among SMEs.

The task of risk assessment is not universally spread

- In France, according to a survey carried out in 2004, 76% of employers in enterprises with 20 and more workers claim to have carried out a risk assessment and drawn up the necessary documentation.^{iv}
- In the Netherlands, figures from the Dutch Labour Inspectorate for 2006 show that among the smallest enterprises with 1 to 4 workers 42% have carried out a risk assessment (53% among the enterprises with 5 to 9 workers). This figure amounts to 81% in enterprises with 10 to 99 workers, and 97% in enterprises with more than 100 workers.^v
- In Italy, a survey from 2005 shows that 88.5% of the enterprises with less than 50 workers have conducted a risk assessment. In enterprises with more than 50 workers this figure amounts to 93.4%. Among the enterprises with less than 50 workers 84.5% have documented risk assessments, while among the ones with more than 50 workers the percentage was 92.6.^{vi}

- According to the Spanish Fifth National Survey on Working Conditions^{vii}, conducted in 2003, 61% of employers in industry and services claim to have carried out or are in the process of carrying out a risk assessment. Compared with the previous survey from 1999 this figure has doubled.
- In Germany, a survey from 2005 shows that among enterprises with 1 to 9 workers 30% have conducted a risk assessment. Among the enterprises with 10 to 49 workers the percentage was 54% and in enterprises with 50 to 249 workers 80%. Among the large-sized enterprises with 250 and more workers, 97% have assessed their risks.^{viii}
- In a Latvian survey^{ix} carried out in 2006, three quarters of the employers indicated that risk assessment was not made at all or was done partially, and only 22% of respondents stated it had been done fully. Compared with the data from a previous research, it can be concluded that the number of companies where full risk assessment has been carried out has grown, from 15% in 2002 to 22% in 2006.

Good quality risk assessment, including documentation, review, and set-up of action plans, remains an important challenge

- According to a more in-depth survey on risk assessment carried out in Italy in 2000-2002, 95% of enterprises claim to have carried out risk assessment, but just 54% say they have reviewed it. Besides that, in 23% of cases the workers exposed to the risks are not identified and in 21% of the cases there is not enough or any information or description of the preventive and protective measures. This survey also shows that the involvement of workers in the risk assessment process is more important in bigger enterprises: 41% in the smallest ones (6-10 workers) and 57% in the biggest ones (200 workers and more)^x.
- In the UK, a survey carried out by the Trade Union Congress in 2007 among safety representatives indicates that less than three out of ten (28%) claim to be satisfied with their involvement in drawing up the risk assessment. 44% claim that they are not involved at all and 27% claim that they are not sufficiently involved^{xi}.
- According to a survey carried out by the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) in 2003^{xii}, three-quarters of enterprises have fulfilled their obligation to record the results of risk assessment in a written document. Four-fifths of these enterprises say they had no difficulty in drawing up the document. Two-thirds think that carrying out the risk assessment has had a positive impact on their working environment and 40% say that risk assessment has improved the dialogue between management and employees.

3.2 The five-step approach

For most businesses, a straightforward five-step approach^{xiii} to risk assessment should work well. However there are other methods that work equally well, particularly for more complex risks and circumstances.

Step 1 — Identifying hazards and those at risk

Looking for those things at work that have the potential to cause harm, and identifying workers who may be exposed to the hazards.

Step 2 — Evaluating and prioritising risks

Estimating the existing risks (their severity, their probability, etc.) and prioritising them in order of importance. It is essential that the work to be done to eliminate or prevent risks is prioritised.

Step 3 — Deciding on preventive action

Identifying the appropriate measures to eliminate or control the risks.

Step 4 — Taking action

Putting in place the preventive and protective measures through a prioritisation plan (most probably all the problems cannot be resolved immediately) and specifying who does what and when, when a task is to be completed, and the means allocated to implement the measures.

Step 5 — Monitoring and reviewing

The assessment should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains up to date. It has to be revised whenever significant changes occur in the organisation or as a result of the findings of an accident or 'near miss'^{xiv} investigation.

4. Case studies

Behind a notion like risk assessment, which could be perceived as something abstract or just another administrative burden, are individual stories. People can die or have to live with the consequences of accidents and damage to their health for the rest of their lives because risks were not identified and managed.

4.1 Severe chemical accident

A young man, aged 23, suffered extensive burns from contact with a flammable substance used to wash out spray-painting guns. Bad practices at the company included a lack of safe methods to handle and store dangerous chemicals, and a lack of training and supervision. One particularly dangerous practice involved carrying the hazardous gun wash in unlabelled, open-topped buckets. Even after the horrific incident, the company did not comply with the labour inspectorate's required improvements until it was taken to court and fined^{xv}.

4.2 Fatal accidents in farming

Two young migrant workers (21 and 27 years) died after becoming entangled in machinery used on a fruit farm. The task involved the erection and dismantling of 'poly-tunnels', which are secured using long ropes. They became entangled while using a tractor-mounted machine to wind up the rope. Risk assessment was lacking, and the tractor-mounted winder was unsuitable, as it did not have an automatic cut off in the event of entanglement. The workers had not been adequately trained, nor made aware of the dangers posed by the task. Investigators drew attention to the fact that many of the workers on the farm were students, who might not have much understanding of safe working practices^{xvi}.

4.3 Repetitive strain injuries (RSI)

Stephen Fisher was a Principal Engineer in the aerospace industry, with a demanding and exciting job on a new major European missile project that required intense PC work and working long hours. Then one morning in 2002, when he was working at his PC, he experienced an intense and sudden pain, ("*a bolt of lightning on the back of his hand*") and went up his arm. He has never been the same since. He had to stop using a computer immediately, he couldn't use a telephone or drive. After two months he accepted long-term sickness leave. Eighteen months later he was medically retired.

Nearly 6 years on, having spent over €13,000 on RSI treatment since this isn't available on the National Health Service in the UK, he is not fully recovered. His RSI still prevents him from undertaking work that he would have considered easy some years ago.

These risks are well known and documented but unfortunately no risk assessment was carried out. These injuries are preventable by identifying (through a risk assessment) the existence of the risk or the early symptoms and taking early action. Unfortunately his experience is not unique^{xvii}.

5. Good practice examples

5.1 Eliminating the risk

A Dutch company manufactures ribbed floor components. It uses a wooden pallet system to transport these products, in which workers have to handle awkwardly shaped pallet blocks weighing around 25 kg when dry.

The risk of musculoskeletal disorders arising out of the manual handling of these heavy pallet blocks was recognised during the risk assessment.

Potential solutions included changing the design or materials of the pallets and using mechanical lifting aids. However, the company concluded that the best solution was to get rid of the pallets altogether.

A brainstorming session with the employees identified the solution: incorporating a recessed element into the ribbed floor components themselves, rendering the wooden pallets redundant. The feasibility of this solution was tested, examining in particular whether the redesigned components maintained the required quality and construction standards.

The result is that neither employees nor other workers, such as subcontracted drivers, have to expend physical effort and risk injury in handling pallets.

At an annual cost of €137.000, the redesign saved €91.000 a year in other component use and €22.000 in the purchase of pallets. It is more difficult to attribute directly the fall in absence due to ill-health over the past three years to redesign, but there must be a link. Other benefits include a cut in noise as nail guns are no longer needed to repair pallets and quicker deliveries on site because there is no need to load pallets onto trucks.

More information: <http://osha.europa.eu/publications/reports/TE7606536ENC>

5.2 Reduce noise, reduce dust

In an enterprise in Austria intensive grinding was carried on in a metal fabrication process, creating much dust and noise. The company decided to make improvements and set up a special project to reduce these emissions.

Sufficient finance and staff resources were made available and the project team included the affected workers, managers, occupational physicians, works council representatives and prevention specialists. They looked into possible solutions, holding discussions with potential suppliers and talks with the health and safety authorities. Around a dozen design ideas were prepared and assessed.

The changes introduced included:

- grinding cabins with extractor systems
- spot extractor systems
- cartridge filtration systems
- optimising dust capture by redesigning the tool grinding shop
- improved lighting to reduce glare and shadows.

The result was:

- a reduction in atmospheric dust loads (up to 90% in some places);
- draught reductions, and
- noise reduction by 10 dB(A) for the machine operators and the surrounding hall area after the introduction of cabins.

The total investment was around €400.000. Apart from improved worker health and safety, the benefits of less airborne dust include calculated total savings of around €70.000 a year.

More information is available at: <http://osha.europa.eu/publications/reports/106>

6. Further links

Campaign website

<http://hw.osha.europa.eu>

Factsheet 80: *Risk Assessment – The key to healthy workplaces*

<http://osha.europa.eu/publications/factsheets/80>

Factsheet 81: *Risk Assessment – The roles of the main actors*

<http://osha.europa.eu/publications/factsheets/81>

Council directive 89/391 of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work

<http://osha.europa.eu/legislation/directives/A/1/1>

Risk assessment

<http://osha.europa.eu/topics/riskassessment>

7. About the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, based in Bilbao, Spain, was set up by the European Union to provide information on occupational safety and health. The Agency acts as a catalyst for developing and disseminating information that helps to protect Europe's workers.

By bringing together representatives from governments, employers' and workers' organisations, as well as leading health and safety experts in the EU Member States and beyond, the Agency provides a reliable, balanced and impartial source of OSH information.

For more information, visit the Agency website: <http://osha.europa.eu>

ⁱ P. Hämäläinen, J.Takala, KL. Saarela, (study to be published), Tampere University of Technology (Finland), study made for the International Labour Office, ILO.

ⁱⁱ Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work.

(<http://osha.europa.eu/legislation/directives/A/1/1>).

ⁱⁱⁱ COM (2004) 62 final: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND

THE COMMITTEE OF REGIONS on the practical implementation of the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Directives 89/391 (Framework), 89/654 (Workplaces), 89/655 (Work Equipment), 89/656 (Personal Protective Equipment), 90/269 (Manual Handling of Loads) and 90/270 (Display Screen Equipment).

^{iv} Th. Coutrot, *Plus de trois établissements sur quatre déclarent évaluer les risques professionnels, Premières Synthèses n-09.3*, Dares, Mars 2007 (Enquête relations professionnelles et négociations d'entreprise (REPONSE) 2004-2005).

^v M. Bos, F. Saleh, O. Erdem, J. Samadhan, *Arbo in bedrijf 2006'. Een onderzoek naar de naleving van arbo-verplichtingen, blootstelling aan arbeidsrisico's en genomen maatregelen in 2006*, Arbeidsinspectie, October 2007.

^{vi} S. Perticaroli, A. Leva, *La cultura della sicurezza. Indagine sulle modalità di gestione di salute e sicurezza nelle aziende italiane*, ISPESL, November 2006.

^{vii} Instituto Nacional de Seguridad e Higiene en el trabajo, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, *V Encuesta nacional de condiciones de trabajo*, 2004.

^{viii} Survey conducted by BGZ (Berufsgenossenschaftliche Zentrale für Sicherheit und Gesundheit):

http://www.hvbg.de/d/bgz/bgz_info/veranst/archiv_vera/bgz_fachv_nov_2005/seite02.html

http://www.hvbg.de/d/bgz/bgz_info/pdf_bild_info/bgz_fach_nov_2005/pp_rentrop.pdf

^{ix} A/S "Inspecta Latvia" & RSU DVVI, *Working conditions and risks in Latvia*, 2007. (Research "working conditions and risks in Latvia" 2005-2007).

^x Coordinamento delle Regioni e Province autonome, *Rapporto conclusivo del progetto nazionale di monitoraggio e controllo dell'applicazione del D.Lgs. 626/94*, November 2003.

^{xi} TUC, *Focus on Health and Safety. Trade Union trends survey 06/02. TUC biennial survey of safety reps 2006*, London, 2006.

^{xii} LO, *Danske virksomheders brug af APV* (Danish Companies' use of Workplace Risk Assessment), April 2003.

^{xiii} Whether the risk assessment process in your country is divided into more or fewer steps, or even if some of the five steps are different, the guiding principles should be the same.

^{xiv} A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage — but had the potential to do so.

^{xv} Reported in Health and Safety Practitioner, UK, 23.1, January 2005.

^{xvi} <http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2005/e05095.htm>

^{xvii} <http://ew2007.osha.europa.eu/europeansummit/> (see "Stephen Fisher" - Workshop 3).