

Emerging psychosocial risks related to occupational safety and health – an expert forecast

Brussels 8-9/04/2008

<http://osha.europa.eu>

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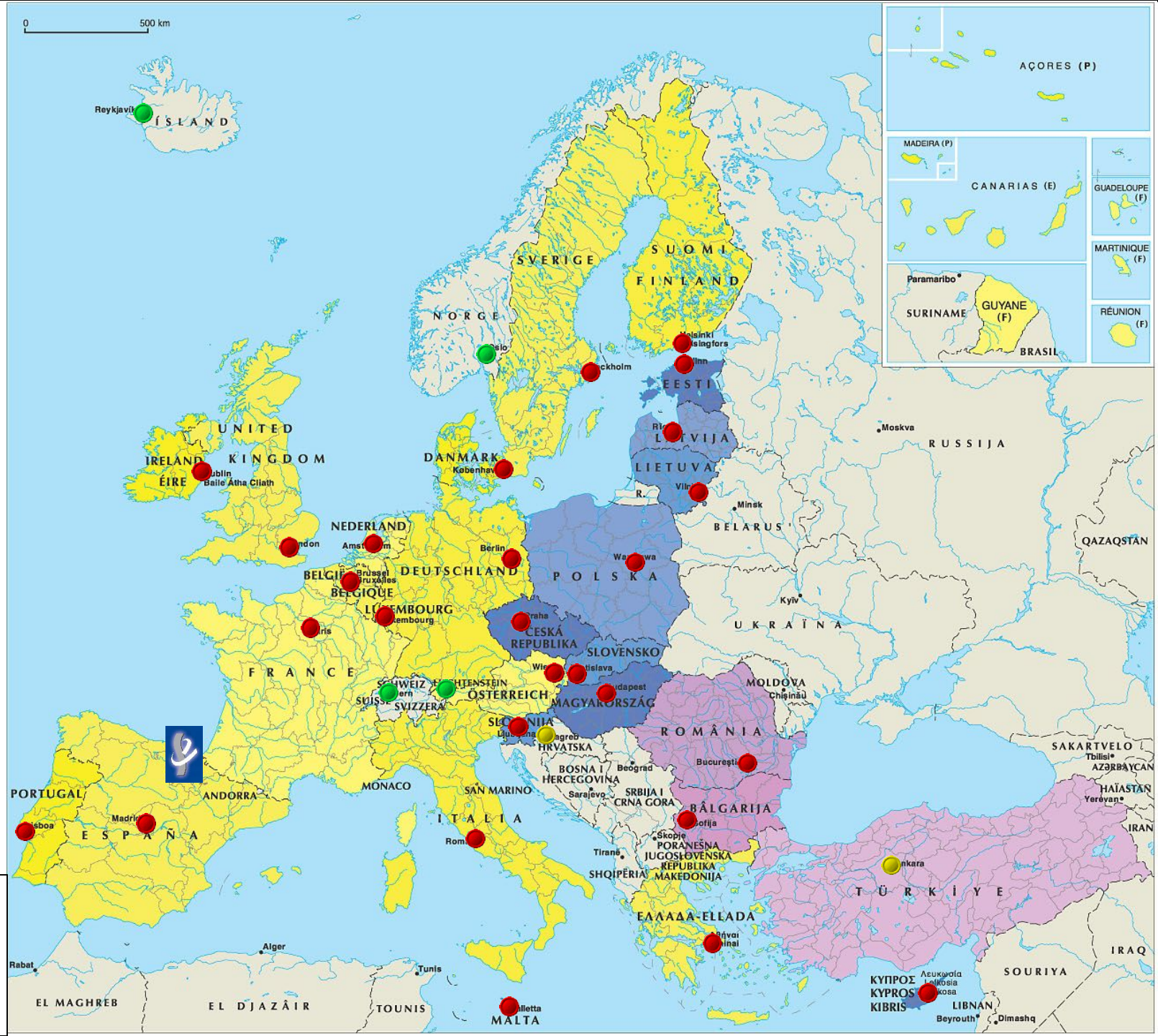


European Agency for Safety and Health at Work was established in 1996 in Bilbao to help improve working conditions in the European Union

European Risk Observatory: identifying emerging risks

- providing an overview of safety and health at work in Europe
- describing trends and underlying factors
- anticipating changes in work and their likely consequences for safety and health
- stimulating debate





An "**emerging OSH risk**" is understood to be any risk that is both

- (1) **new** - the risk was previously non-existent and is caused by new processes, new technologies, new types of workplace, or social or organisational change; or a long-standing issue is now considered to be a risk due to new scientific knowledge or a change in public perception, and
- (2) **increasing** - the number of hazards contributing to the risk and the likelihood of exposure to the hazards are rising, and the effects of the hazards on workers' health are getting worse.

- **The expert forecast on emerging psychosocial risks was carried out in 2003 and 2004 by means of the Delphi method (with the five-point Likert scale).**
 - **Three questionnaire-based surveys were completed. 62 experts in the first survey round, and 79 experts in the second and third rounds, were invited to participate. The response rate: 45% (1st r.), 27% (2nd r.), and 21% (3rd r.).**
 - **The experts represented 13 EU Member States, the USA and the ILO, and had at least five years' experience in the field of occupational psychology.**

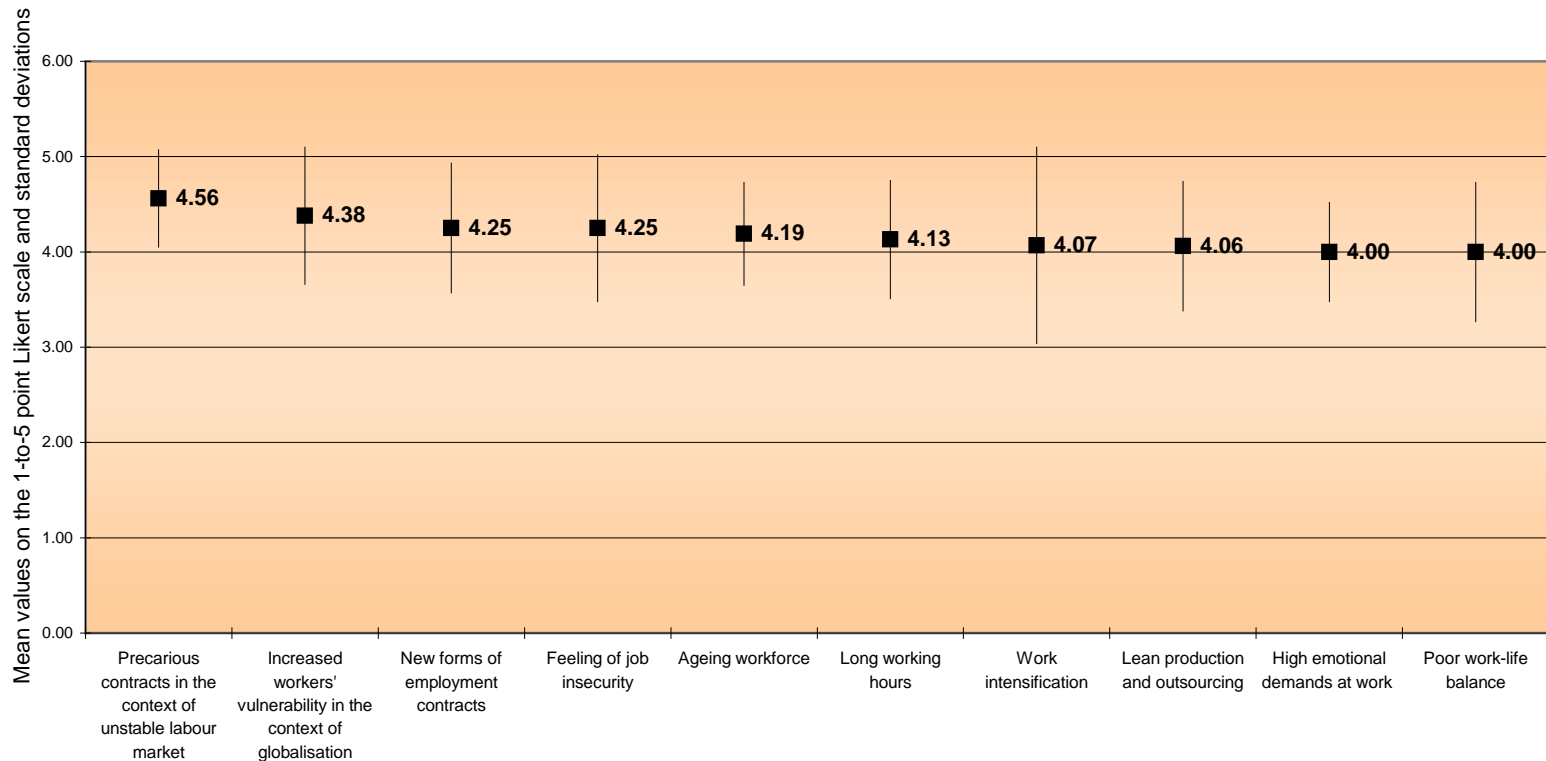
- The experts proposed 42 psychosocial risks, and rated eight of these risks as *strongly emerging*, and 19 as *emerging*.
- The survey results were supplemented by a review of the scientific literature on key topics identified by the experts, focused on:
 - the prevalence of the emerging risks, health and safety outcomes, and need for future research;
 - examples of possible preventive measures at national and company level.

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The 10 most important emerging psychosocial risks identified in the survey

(NB: $MV > 4$: risk strongly agreed as emerging; $3.25 < MV \leq 4$: risk agreed as emerging)



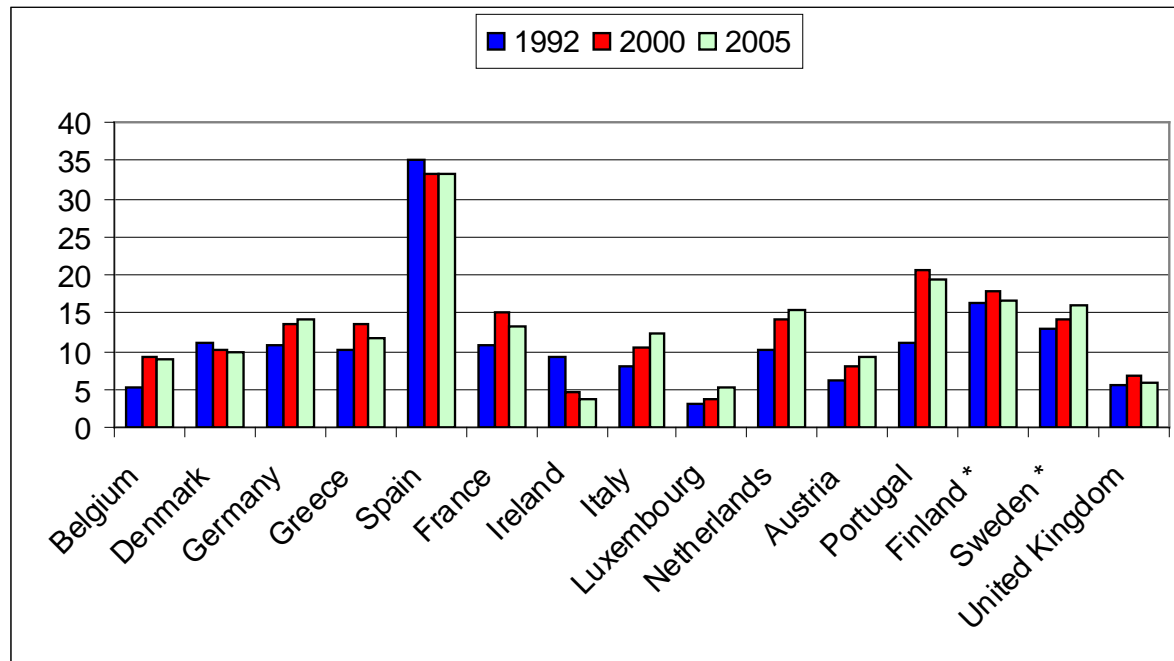
- **The main emerging psychosocial risks identified were related to the following five areas:**

(1) New forms of employment contracts and job insecurity

Workers on precarious contracts tend to carry out the most hazardous jobs, work in poorer conditions and receive less OSH training.

Moreover, working in unstable labour markets can give rise to feelings of job insecurity and increase work-related stress.

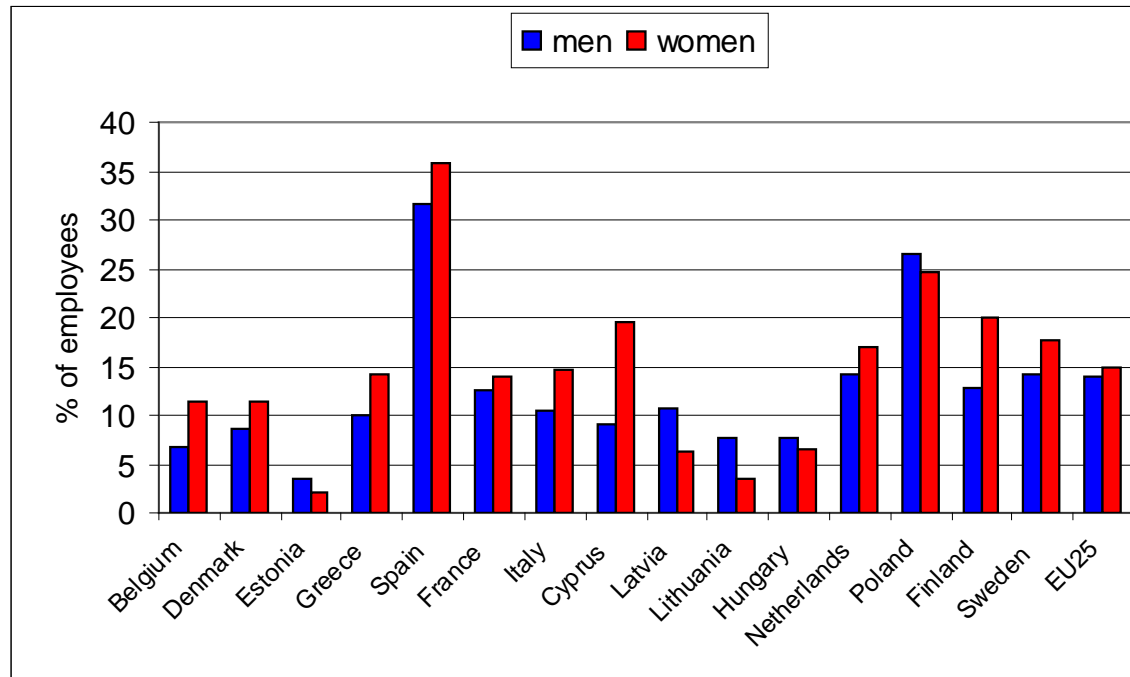
➤ Temporary employment in Europe (EU15)*



(* Note: 1995 instead of 1992 for Finland and Sweden)

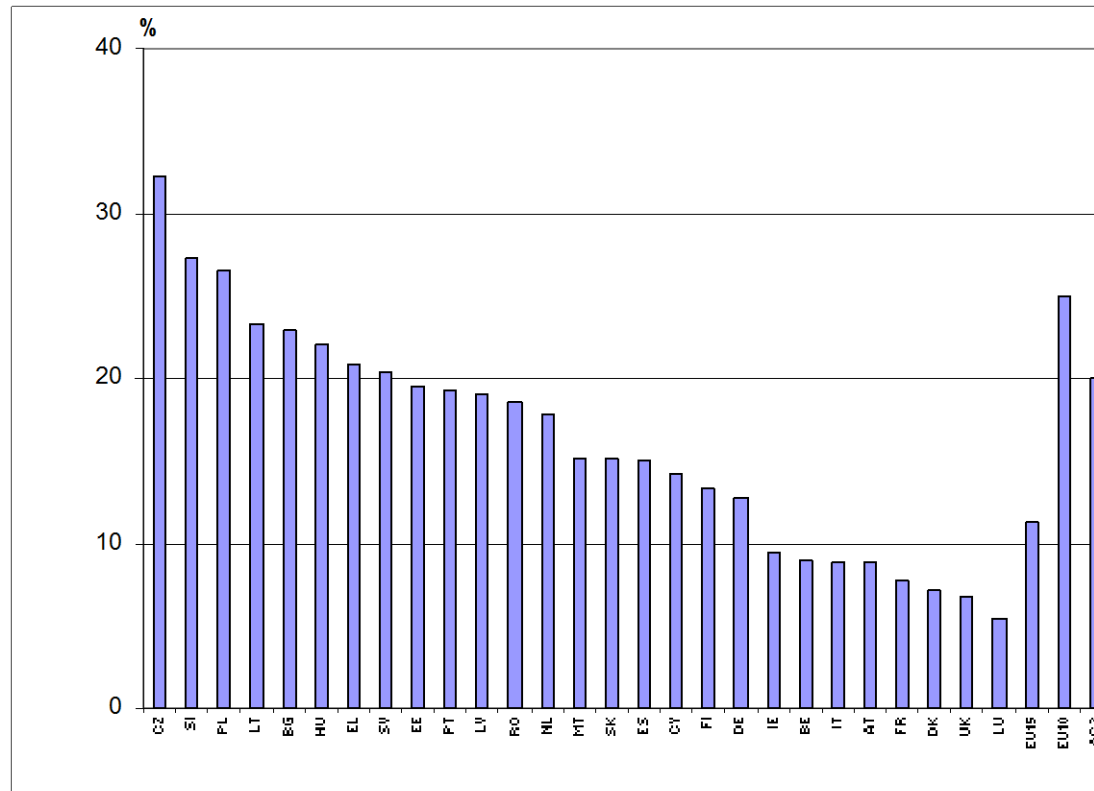
* EUROSTAT, 2006

➤ Temporary employment in selected European countries (2005) *



* EUROSTAT, 2006

➤ Job insecurity in EU countries (2005, [13]).



* European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2006).

- **The main emerging psychosocial risks identified were related to the following five areas:**

(2) The OSH risks for the ageing workforce

Older workers are more vulnerable to the hazards resulting from poor working conditions than younger employees.

The failure to provide ageing workers with life-long learning opportunities additionally increases the mental and emotional demands made upon them.

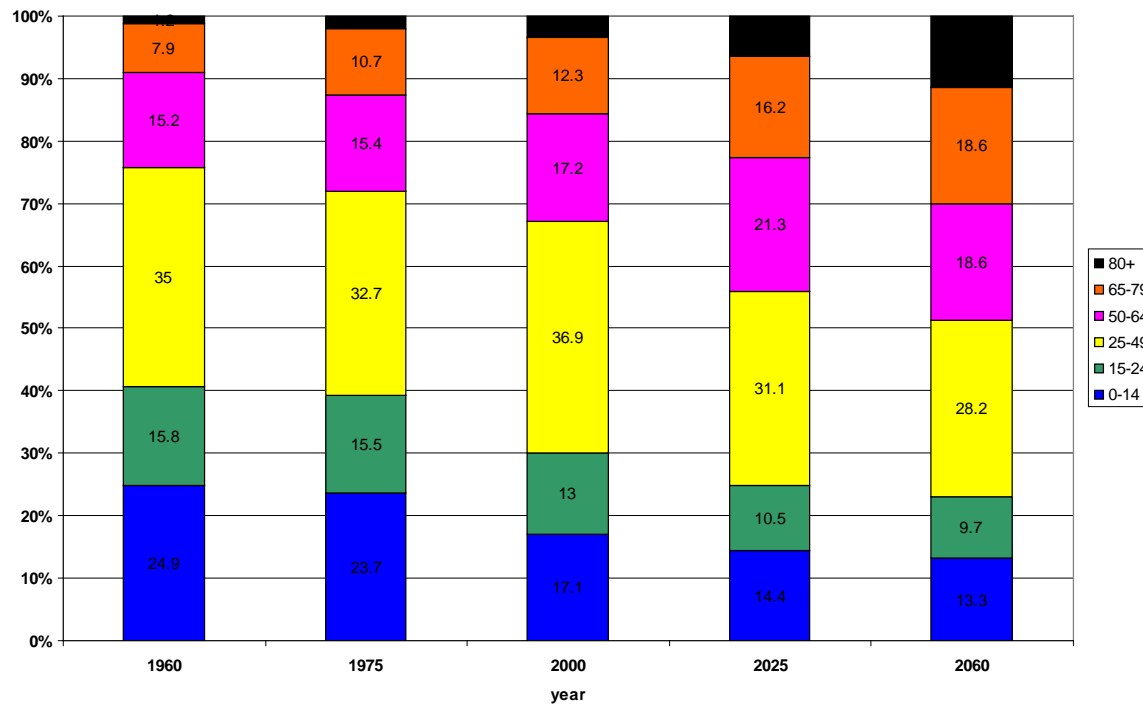
Good working conditions have to be provided and tailored to the needs of each employee, including ageing workers.

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➤ Age distribution in Europe from 1960 to 2060 *



* EUROSTAT, 2005

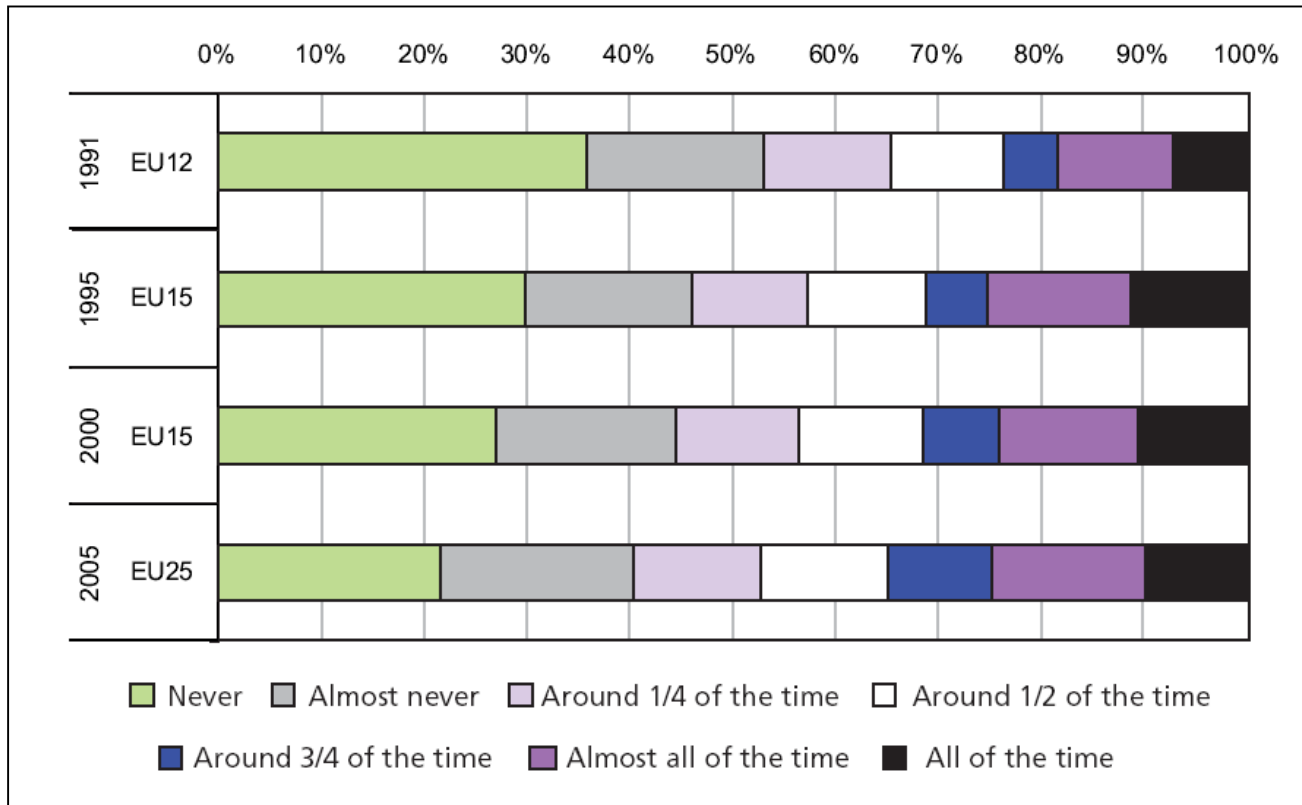
- **The main emerging psychosocial risks identified were related to the following five areas:**

(3) Work intensification - high workload and work pressure

Many workers are handling growing amounts of information, having to cope with higher workloads and greater pressure at work.

Some workers, particularly those employed in new forms of employment or highly competitive fields may fear having their efficiency and output assessed more closely, and hence tend to work longer hours to finish tasks, without proper compensation and social support.

➤ Working at a very high speed [18].



*European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fifteen years of working conditions in the EU: Charting the trends. (2006).

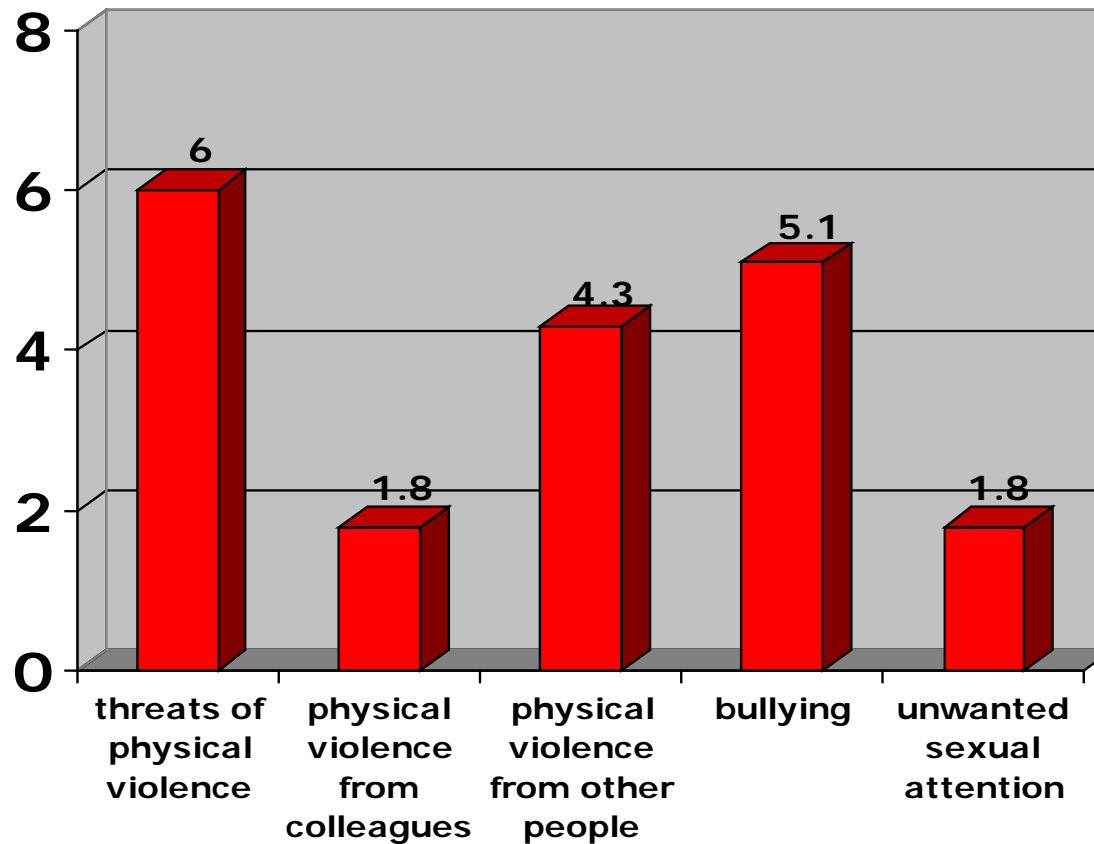
- **The main emerging psychosocial risks identified were related to the following five areas:**

(4) High emotional demands at work, including violence and bullying

Although this issue is not new, it is of great concern, especially in the growing and increasingly competitive healthcare and service sectors.

Violence and bullying were also identified as a contributing factor to the increased emotional demands being made on workers.

➤ Violence and bullying at work, EU-27 (% yes)*



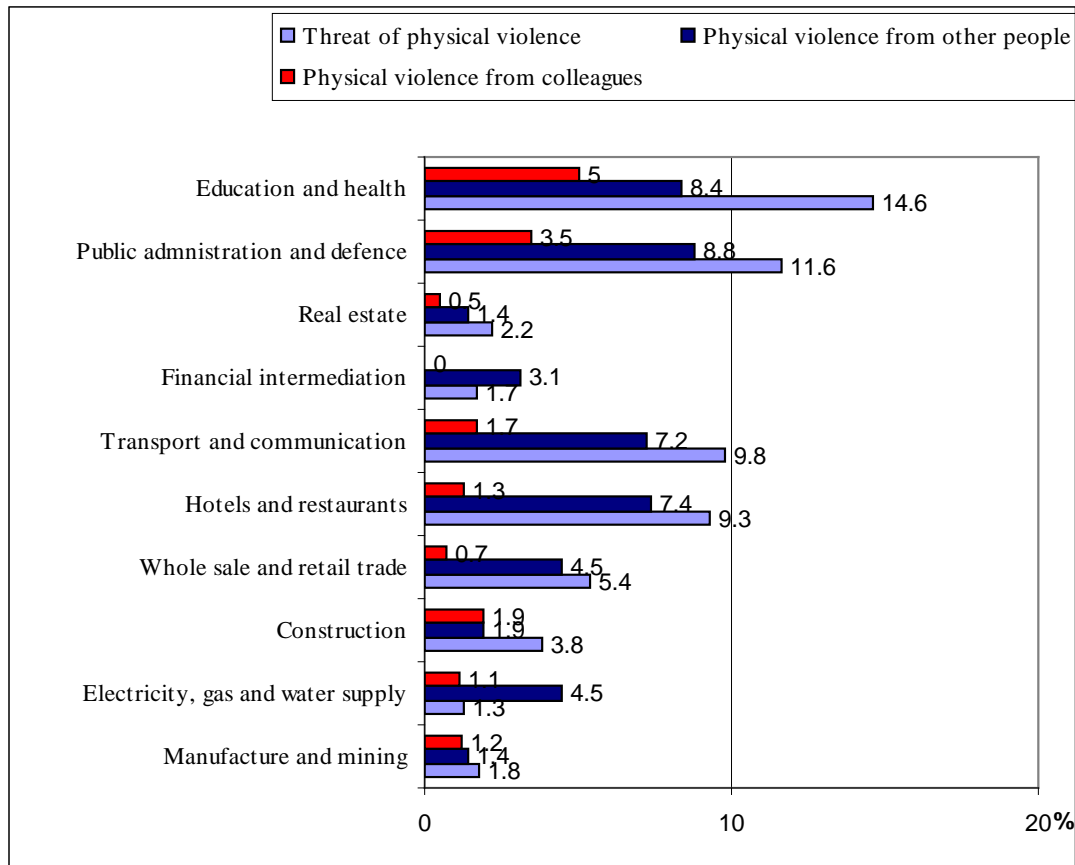
*European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2006).

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➤ Physical violence by sectors*



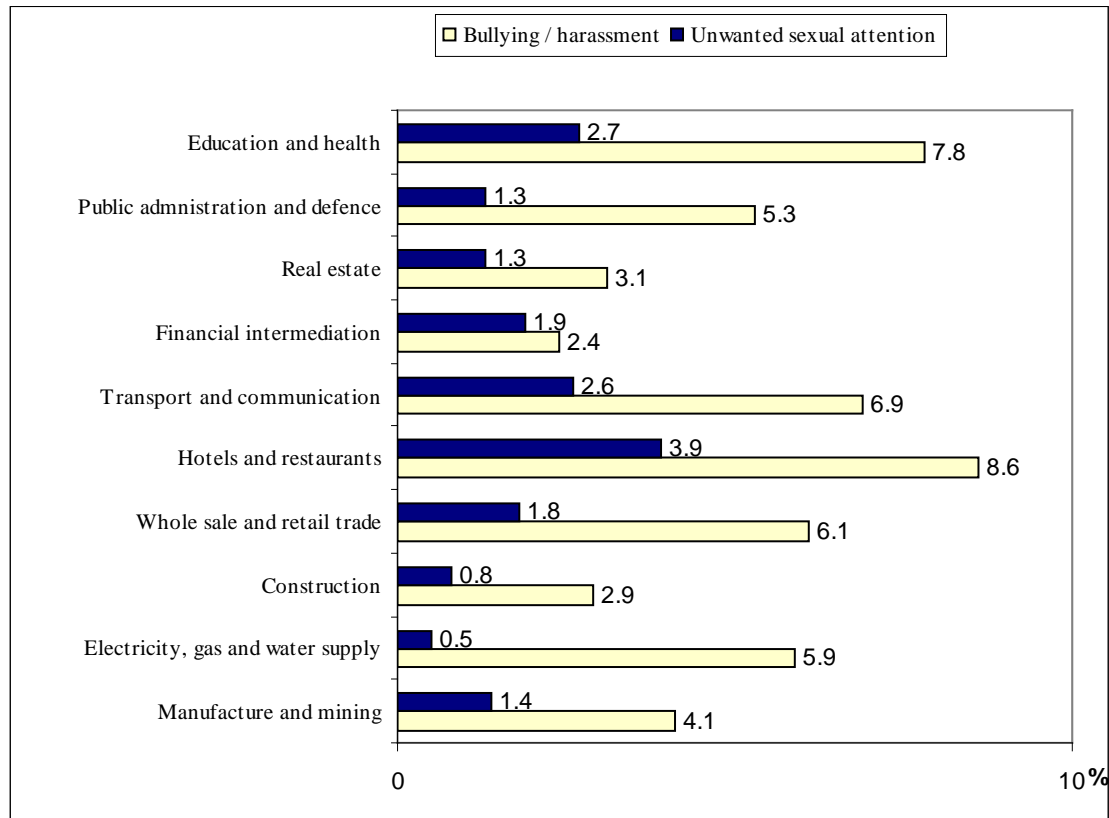
*European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2005).

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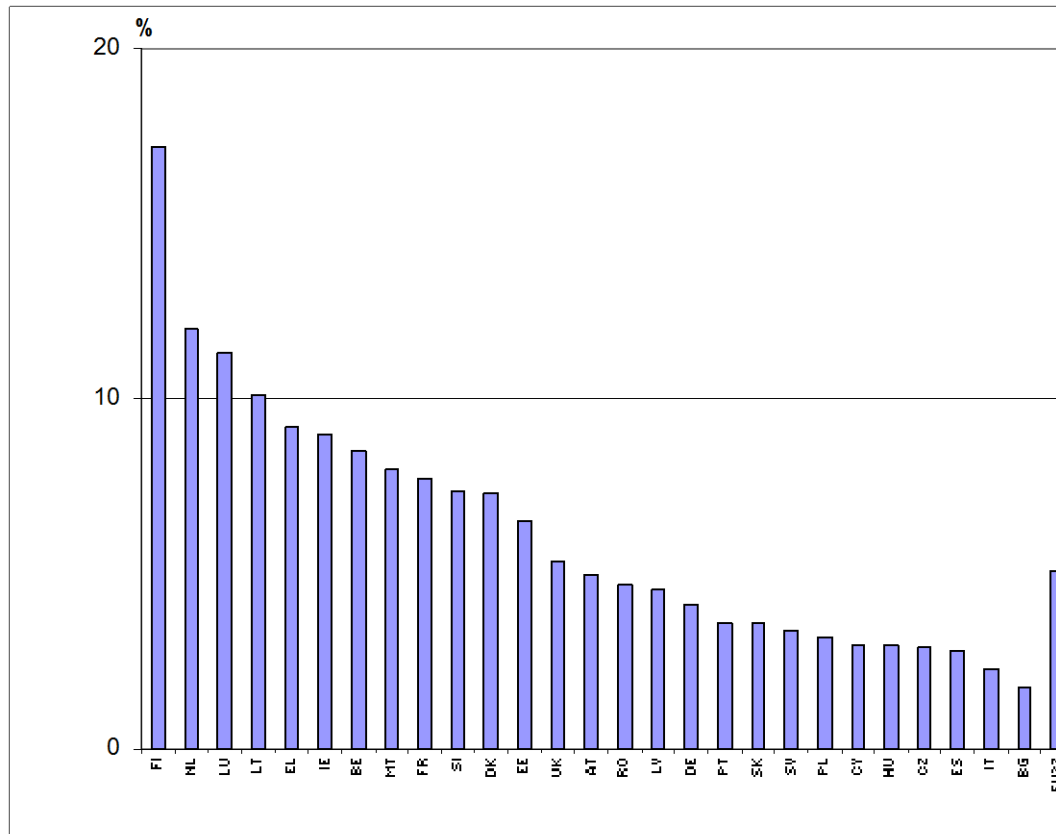
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➤ Bullying/harassment and unwanted sexual attention by sectors*



*European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2005).

➤ Bullying/harassment in EU Member States (2005)

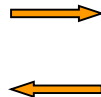
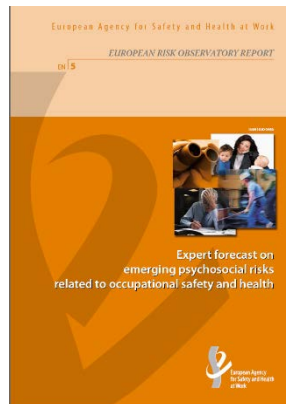


*European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2006).

- The main emerging psychosocial risks identified were related to the following five areas:

(5) Poor work-life balance

Uncertain casual work, high workloads and variable or unpredictable working hours can lead to a serious conflict between the demands of work and private life.

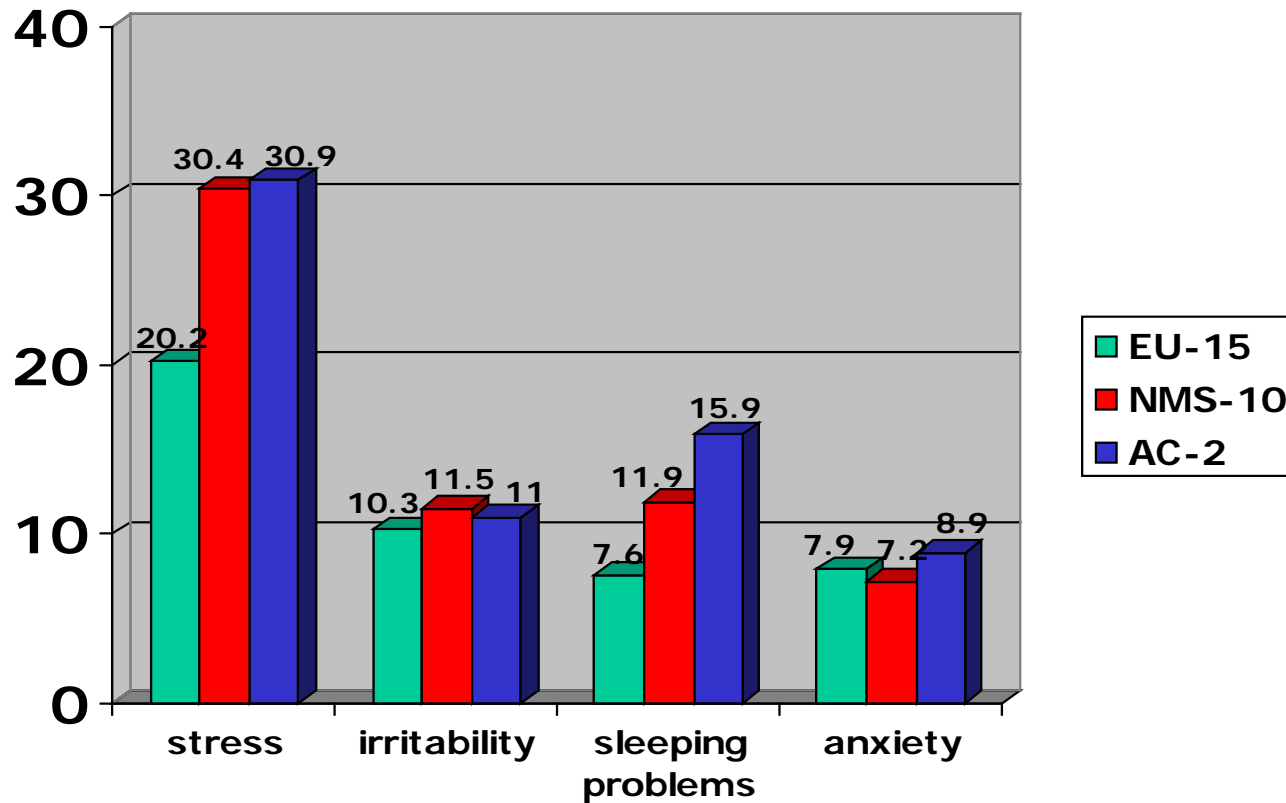


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➤ Work affects health (% yes) *



* European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2006).



- **Factsheet 74 - Expert forecast on emerging psychosocial risks related to occupational safety and health (OSH)**
- Available in: [\[Български\]](#) [\[Čeština\]](#) [\[Dansk\]](#) [\[Deutsch\]](#) [\[Ελληνικά\]](#) [\[English\]](#) [\[Español\]](#) [\[Eesti\]](#) [\[Suomi\]](#) [\[Français\]](#) [\[Magyar\]](#) [\[Italiano\]](#) [\[Lietuviškai\]](#) [\[Latviešu\]](#) [\[Malti\]](#) [\[Nederlands\]](#) [\[Polski\]](#) [\[Português\]](#) [\[Română\]](#) [\[Slovenčina\]](#) [\[Slovenščina\]](#) [\[Svenska\]](#)

➤ 2007

- “Emerging psychosocial risks related to OSH – an expert forecast”
- OSH in figures - Stress

➤ 2008

- Psychosocial risks workshop
- Violence and bullying - literature survey, case study, policy and practice overview
- Enterprise survey
- Combined exposure to psychosocial and MSD risk factors

- **Workshop on emerging psychosocial risks (Brussels, 8-9 April 2008)**
 - to discuss and consolidate the results of the expert forecast
 - to explore concrete, practical ways to tackle the psychosocial emerging risks identified in this forecast
 - to stimulate EU research networking activities related to the priorities identified

Thank you for your attention!

- **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work:** <http://osha.europa.eu/>
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