

EU-OSHA RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

Brussels, 25 May 2018

Summary

1. In his introduction William Cockburn, Head of Prevention and Research Unit EU-OSHA emphasised EU-OSHA's role in supporting coordination of OSH research in Europe. This consists in defining priorities for OSH research, supporting networking within the research community, seeking synergies, and promoting the visibility of OSH on the political agenda.
2. Peter Paszkiewicz gave the update on behalf of PEROSH, the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health. He started his presentation by briefly presenting PEROSH and its aim to coordinate and cooperate on European research in occupational safety and health, improve the quality of research and the dissemination of results. He pointed out that PEROSH collaboration creates synergies and facilitates a more efficient use of resources. PEROSH also supports research exchange and promotes young researchers by organising the biannual research exchange conferences.

P. Paszkiewicz presented current and upcoming PEROSH projects. Future projects include a project on Sustainable working life, ERGO Firefighter on protective clothing for firefighters, a project on TONAL Noise, assessing the impact of noise on mental health, a project on Dose-exposure relationships, with a first focus on butadiene, and the ICSS-HS project on the evaluation of measurement strategies within which PEROSH collaborate with NIOSH. For more information please see the presentation attached and PEROSH website: <http://www.perosh.eu/>.

P. Paszkiewicz also mentioned the award winning PEROSH paper about guidelines for measuring sedentary work <http://www.perosh.eu/perosh-paper-about-guidelines-for-measuring-sedentary-work-wins-prestigious-award/>.

Answering a question by C. Hakansta about the possibilities for researchers outside PEROSH to participate in PEROSH projects, P. Paszkiewicz confirmed that it is possible and there are examples of such collaboration involving researchers from non-PEROSH members.

Marie Defrance informed about the Fifth International Conference on Wellbeing at Work <https://www.inrs-waw2019.fr/> hosted by INRS and organised with the support of PEROSH and its Wellbeing and Work Project Group.

In relation to PEROSH efforts to ensure better visibility for OSH in FP9, Maria Albin informed that the Swedish Platform for Sustainable Working Life and PEROSH jointly submitted a proposal to the EU Consultation on the Programme. She stated that the Programme proposal looks promising, occupational aspects are better integrated and OSH has more visibility.

Commenting on the issue, Tuomo Karjalainen noted that changes are still possible, as the Council and European Parliament will negotiate and subsequently adopt the Commission's proposal for the programme. He emphasized that at this stage, efforts should focus on FP9, as the topics for

Horizon 2020 are fixed. As the proposal will be discussed in the EP, the final version can be influenced through MEPs. Also DG EMPL is providing comments on the proposal.

3. Following a short general introduction on EU-OSHA (EU background, relevant policy documents, EU-OSHA vision and mission, budget and staff), W. Cockburn gave an update on EU-OSHA activities by priority areas, which include (main points, for more information see PPT presentation enclosed):

- a. Anticipating change

Emmanuelle Brun informed that the foresight project on ICT is being finalized, the final report, summary report, brochure and scenario cartoons will be published end September. Dissemination workshops are being organized this year in Slovenia and Norway. Other countries have also expressed interest in organizing workshops.

Preparations for the next foresight exercise will start end 2018 and will include the ex-post evaluation of the last foresight and definition of the topic. An expert meeting is planned with the participation of foresight experts and would include PEROSH members. In parallel, we continue producing Expert articles in the future of work. Two articles on the e-retail sector and performance-enhancing drugs will be published in June. Three new articles will be commissioned. Examples of topics considered: Artificial Intelligence, exoskeletons, social innovation, etc.

- b. ESENER 3

Contract has been signed. First results expected towards end 2019

- c. OSH overviews

Feasibility study on workers exposure survey was followed by an expert workshop. Governing Board's decision expected in June. A new OSH overview on Digitalisation and OSH to run 2020-2022 (preparatory work to start in 2019) will also be proposed to the Board in June.

- d. OiRA

About 150 tools in 16 countries. More attention will be given to promotion and dissemination

- e. Networking knowledge

EU-OSH info system – after the end of the pilot project by the Commission, EU-OSHA is taking over the development. Challenges include issues around the comparability of the data. One of the planned indicators is a measure of research capacity.

Request from the Commission to take over the development of HazChem database

W. Cockburn informed on proposals which will be presented to the Governing Board for decision in June meeting, including on changing the Campaign cycle, on workers exposure survey, and on HazChem database.

Commenting on HazChem database, Maria Albin emphasized that there is a need for data and she referred to research on exposure to crystalline silica in Sweden, including the creation of a database.

Answering a question by C. Hakansta on ELA, W. Cockburn updated on latest developments. The creation of ELA will not have direct impact on EU-OSHA as OSH will be beyond the scope of ELA,

which will be focusing on cross-border work and ensuring that EU rules that regulate mobility are followed. However, EU-OSHA is part of the Advisory Group for the preparation of ELA, and EU-OSHA Director Christa Sedlatschek participated in the first meeting of the Group.

4. Tuomo Karjalainen from DG Research and Innovation gave a presentation on EU funding of OSH under HORIZON 2020 and the preparation of the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, FP9. He presented the key OSH related projects funded by HORIZON 2020, the European Human Biomonitoring Initiative (HBM4EU), and Exposome in particular. He informed about the 'Conference Human Biomonitoring in Europe – science and policy for healthy citizens' to be held on September 28, 2018 in Vienna, presenting new results emerging from HBM4EU <http://www.hbm4eu-vienna2018.com/>. He also presented the priorities for final three years of H2020 under Societal Challenge 1 (Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing) and the remaining calls for proposals. He summarized the key findings of the mid-term evaluation of the HORIZON 2020 and the lessons learned. Finally, he gave an update on the preparation of FP9, which is called Horizon Europe. Horizon Europe will take a mission-oriented approach: it will incorporate research and innovation missions to ensure the effectiveness of research and innovation funding by pursuing clearly defined targets. The preparation of the new framework programme included the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, the Lab-Fab-App report (informally the Lamy report), foresight studies and various other reports.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/designing-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/what-shapes-next-framework-programme_en

After the presentation, the ways of influencing the content of the FP were discussed. W. Cockburn envisaged getting in touch with the relevant person at DG EMPL.

Answering Maria Albin's question on expected changes to the proposal, T. Karjalainen estimated that about 20% of the proposal could be modified, but rather by adding something than taking out. The best time for getting in touch with the Programme Committee Members would be the beginning of next year, when the work programme will be defined.

5. Birgitta Forsström from NIVA informed about the Fafo project on 'The future of work: Opportunities and challenges for the Nordic models'. The project is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and is conducted by a team of more than 30 Nordic scholars from universities and research institutes in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The researchers will study how the ongoing transformations of production and labour markets associated with, amongst other, digitalization, demographic change, and new forms of employment will influence the future of work in the Nordic countries. The project started late 2017 and will be completed by a synthesis report in 2020. Project leader: Jon Erik Dølvik. A conference will be held in April 2019 in Iceland.

For more information on the project see

<https://www.fafo.no/index.php/forskningstema/prosjekter/aktive-prosjekter/item/the-future-of-work-2>

6. The meeting continued with updates on the situation of OSH research by representatives of the OSH research institutes and funding agencies based on the questions sent to the participants in advance (see ANNEX).

FINLAND, FIOH

Update by Antti Koivula

A. Koivula started his update by showing a video presenting FIOH <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-1F6jtsEk0>. He recognised that FIOH went through some challenging times as the governmental funding was drastically reduced by more than 40% and cutbacks on staff were necessary. The institute had to refocus its activities and adjust its organizational structure. Now the number of staff is growing again and went back from under 500 up to 500 again. In Finland OSH is a minor science at universities and its significance is decreasing, meaning that FIOH is the main actor in this area and its importance is growing. The Finnish economy is recovering, which also has a positive impact on FIOH business activities. Over half of FIOH funding comes from outside the government budget – from business activities and external research funding.

Finland is going through a major reform of the social security system, linked to a new vision of welfare state, and the question is what the implications for occupational health care will be.

Another major issue for the Finnish society is how to ensure work ability of an ageing workforce in a new fragmented work environment, how to measure work ability in such environment.

Digitalisation, AI, and how to use new technology for the benefit of OSH are issues of growing importance in Finland too.

The old generation of OSH experts is retiring and in the same time manufacturing is moving back to Finland, new people with adequate expertise are needed, and transfer of knowledge and education has to be managed.

Transferring of research result to practice has been a challenge for long time. New technologies are changing the way we share knowledge. In FIOH, 20 people are working on developing e-learning solutions, applications combining human creativity and new technology. In these projects, researchers work together with IT specialists.

New research initiatives include the 'Work Life Big Data' compilation database. The database will combine information on working life from different sources, including occupational health, work ability, work environment, occupational health services and occupational safety and health. The database will serve policy-makers, researchers, and society at large.

As FIOH went through a major renewal of activities, it will also come back to European and international cooperation. The main areas of interest include zero accident vision, digitalization and AI, and the renewal of welfare state.

AUSTRIA, AUVA

Update by Georg Effenberger

After last autumn's elections, the Austrian Government is a coalition of ÖVP, the conservatives, and the right wing FPÖ. This government, which has been in office since December, has defined in the Government Agreement that AUVA must save EUR 500 million, otherwise it will be abolished. The first results of the savings must be visible by the end of 2018.

After a phase of public debate, negotiations are now under way on the entire organisation of the social security system, and the issue of the AUVA is an essential part of this. After the summer there should be more clarity about the future.

The positive thing about the situation of the last few weeks is that the level of awareness and knowledge of what AUVA actually do has been significantly increased, especially among journalists.

Current research and activities at AUVA:

New campaign dangerous substances --> focus on carcinogens
Digitalisation: connection between safety and security
Electromagnetic fields and risk assessment
Indirect UV Exposure of workers – risk assessment
Testing Lab PPE – new EU regulation

SWEDEN

Update by Maria Albin, Carin Håkansta, Elisabeth Lagerlöf

In Sweden, the situation in terms of research funding is improving. The closing of NOWL in 2007 created a gap in research funding, in the continuity of building up expertise in OSH research, and a gap in European cooperation – the network had weakened. Now OSH is high on the political agenda and sustainable work is main priority.

In the past years the Swedish Platform for Sustainable work has been an important actor. It was set up in 2013, built on a consortium of leading Swedish OSH researchers, the social partners and representatives from Swedish private companies and authorities. The aim of the platform is to Strengthen European cooperation, promote the inclusion of sustainable work in HORIZON 2020, and promote Swedish research on sustainable work. <https://sustainablework2020.se/about/>

The main research funding agencies in Sweden are Forte (government agency) and AFA Insurance (owned by social partners: more applied research than Forte). Situation is good as current government has invested in a ten-year funding programme on working life research 2017-2026. It started with EUR 3 million in 2017 and 4 million in 2018 but from 2019 it will be 6 million EUR/year. In total EUR 550 million.

The new agency MynAK www.mynak.se (literal translation is Authority for work environment knowledge) started on 1 June. It will be responsible for OSH collaboration at European and international level, evaluation of Swedish OSH policy, and dissemination of research findings in the field of OSH.

One of the challenges in Sweden is that there is too little truly multi-/interdisciplinary research collaboration. This leads to many research projects dealing with the same issues but few discussion between the different traditional scientific fields. In this respect, NIWL, the OSH research institute that was closed in 2007 has been missed.

MynAK has overcome the initial challenge of not being allowed to do research (Swedish policy is that research should only take place at the universities). Now the government regulation allows the Agency to carry out research and there is a new law that allows the agency access to sensitive data needed to analyse OSH policy.

Priorities for research include increasing diversity, new opportunities and equity, employment participation, platform economy – disruptive elements, and prevention through design.

One of the issues much discussed in Sweden is the modern office. Quite a few research projects investigating questions of physical and psychosocial risks are starting to produce results for example in relation to the use of cell offices vs. open plan offices or vs. activity based offices.

Another hot topic is spatial and temporal flexibility due to digitalisation and more liberal employer policies and their impact on OSH and productivity. In Sweden, effects such as stress from working around the clock, loneliness, reduced social support and learning.

As regards future research coordination meetings, Mynak should be invited.

FRANCE, INRS

Update by Louis Laurent and Marie Defrance, INRS

INRS is funded by contributions from French firms, through a fund managed by Social Insurance for occupational diseases and accidents. INRS board is composed of representatives of employer associations and employee trade unions.

INRS mission is to contribute to the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases. INRS acts through four types of actions:

- studies and research
- assistance
- training
- information

Around 260 of the staff (about 130 researchers) are conducting research projects. There are about 100 research projects covering a large range of areas: chemical, physical, biological agents, MSDs, psychosocial risks, and "emerging topics" such as Future factories, collaborative robotics, additive manufacturing.

The INRS activity is ruled through a 5 year contract between the French Insurance and the government. We are presently waiting for the signature of the next one (2018-2022).

Second point: On January 22, 2018, the Prime Minister entrusted a group ("Lecocq, Dupuis, Forest") with a mission about the occupational health organization in France. The report is expected in June.

FRANCE, ANSES

Update by Henri Bastos

ANSES research funding is in the range of 5-6 million euros / year, of which 30% is OSH research. 1-2 million is spent on research on EMF, which also covers OSH aspects. Another OSH relevant area is pesticide research, including research on endocrine disruptors. Other topics include impact of new technologies, multiple exposure, and impact of precarious situations.

GERMANY, IFA / DGUV

Update by Peter Paszkiewicz

Main research topics at IFA/DGUV are linked to increasing impact of ICT: security in connection with testing and certification, use of head mounted displays for the safety check for commission activities, hazardous substance emissions from 3D printers, human-robot collaboration, new forms of work and change of office work (investigations on activity during office work).

DGUV has started a new joint prevention campaign with its member institutions for the public and private sectors at the A+A 2017

(https://www.dguv.de/en/prevention/campaigns/prev_campaigns/ausblick/index.jsphttps://www.dguv.de/en/prevention/campaigns/prev_campaigns/ausblick/index.jsp). This prevention campaign "Kommitmentensch" ties up to Vision Zero and is dedicated to raising awareness of safety and health as important values for all people, all organisations and for society as a whole as well as integrating safety and health into how we think and act. The aim is to have safety and health as the benchmark for all of our actions and to always consider them as important criteria for all decisions in order to establish a good culture of prevention in every company and institution. Since

a change in values, value systems and culture can only take place over a longer period of time, the campaign will run for up to 10 years. The campaign will be continuously evaluated.

Six fields of action have been identified, as a whole they form the culture of prevention of a company: • LEADERSHIP • COMMUNICATION • PARTICIPATION • ERROR CULTURE • SOCIAL CLIMATE • SAFETY & HEALTH.

GERMANY, BAUA

Update by Anita Tisch

Although there is a "new" government (same parties, different minister) in Germany, no consequences are expected for BAuA. The institute has a stable governmental funding.

In BAUA's research agenda there is a focus on "digitalization" for at least the next four years. This is in line with the political agenda whereas a department responsible for digitalization was created at the ministry (of labour and social affairs). Furthermore, flexibilisation of working time is on the political agenda and the opposition already takes an attempt to ease current legislation.

Further relevant topics for the BAuA are the continuation of last BAuA working programme priorities, e.g. mental health, cardiovascular diseases, MSDs, biological agents, nanotechnology, changing world of work.

7. While concluding the meeting, W. Cockburn emphasized that EU-OSHA would welcome tenders from the organisations in PEROSH in response to agency procurements. He explained the principles of the last call for tenders for a multiple framework contract with the opening of the competition. As regards future collaboration, it could include organizing meetings to share information, sharing research agendas, dissemination of research results, and influencing the content of FP9. According to the feedback by the participants, yearly research coordination meetings are adequate, and linking them to another event of common interest is seen useful and efficient.