

EU-EASTERN PARTNERSHIP SEMINAR

1 Introduction and summary

Since February 2014, EU-OSHA has been implementing a project funded by the European Union under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which enables partner countries in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to participate in the work of the Agency. EU-OSHA has collaborated with its partners in the Eastern Partnership, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, participating in national conferences, delivering training seminars and translating information and tools to raise awareness about important health and safety issues.

As a result of this collaboration, EU-OSHA organised a seminar in Bilbao for our colleagues in the Eastern Partnership in order to exchange information and share experiences about the development of efficient and effective systems for managing occupational safety and health (OSH). Along with representatives from the Eastern Partnership, the seminar brought together representatives from the European Commission (DG EMPL) and EU-OSHA's Focal Point and Governing Board network to provide an EU perspective on the key elements in managing occupational safety and health at national and EU level.

2 Presentations

2.1 Mr Tim Tregenza, EU-OSHA - State of OSH in the EU – ESENER2 Data

Tim Tregenza, Network Manager at EU-OSHA, opened proceedings with a summary of the results of EU-OSHA's recently published ESENER 2 survey of European enterprises. The results from the second ESENER survey published in 2015 demonstrate that the world of work is changing, the population of Europe is ageing and more people are working from home along with an increasing number of workers having difficulty understanding the language spoken on the premises. These changes will continue to have implications for policy makers in managing occupational safety and health in Europe. The growing importance of the service sector is also evident in most commonly cited risk factor in European workplaces relating to dealing with difficult clients or customers. Further information about the role of risk assessments and the drivers and barriers to improving OSH in European workplaces was presented. The full summary can be accessed here:

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/surveys-and-statistics-osh/esener>

2.2 Ms Zinta Podniece, DG EMPL - EU Strategic Framework

DG EMPL of the European Commission was also present at the seminar to provide an overview of their current activities. These include the development of the EU Strategic Framework on OSH and highlighting the importance of OSH in improving the productivity and competitiveness of European businesses, as well as working conditions and job satisfaction, in line with the overall EU 2020 Strategy. The implementation of the strategic framework requires the active participation of social partners and national governments and other key stakeholders and will include a review of the EU acquis to ensure it is effective in delivering the best outcome for OSH in the EU.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=151&langId=en>

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148&langId=en>

2.3 Ms Frédérique Rychener, DG EMPL – DG Employment and Social Affairs in the European Neighbourhood

DG EMPL is also working internationally and has been collaborating with representatives from the Eastern Partnership, especially those countries that have committed to adopting the EU acquis in the field of OSH through the signature of an Association Agreement (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine). DG EMPL is assisting with the monitoring of these agreements by supporting the bilateral Association Committees and by holding regular meetings to discuss specific issues. DG EMPL is also focusing on 'better work' which is linked to the ILO and G20 campaigns. It is the role of each partner country to request support and to highlight occupational safety and health and employment as a priority to ensure that resources in the Commission are made available to support developments.

2.4 Mr Roman Cherneha, Head of the State Labour Service of Ukraine – Current Developments in OSH in Ukraine

Roman Cherneha, Head of the newly established State Labour Service provided an update on developments in Ukraine. The State Labour Service (SLS) brings together in one new institution a range of other public bodies with responsibility for occupational safety and health and labour relations. The establishment of the SLS is the result of lengthy discussions and these are ongoing in relation to specific aspects of its work. The SLS will have offices centred in Kyiv and also regional offices across Ukraine. A key priority will be updating the Labour Code including as it relates to OSH and the EU acquis. Other priorities include developing social dialogue, cooperating with international bodies, the construction of an open and transparent service and combatting corruption. A key concern has been to stress to businesses that the SLS is not just a punitive body but aims to work with businesses, workers and all stakeholders to improve working conditions in Ukraine.

2.5 Mr Igor Ciloci, Deputy Director of State Labour Inspectorate, Moldova – Current Developments in OSH in Moldova

Igor Ciloci, Deputy Director of the State Labour Inspectorate of Moldova, introduced the current state of OSH in Moldova and recent developments. Currently, the Moldovan regulations reflect its international obligations, including the ILO Conventions and the EU Directives. Moldovan OSH legislation requires employers to have risk free workplaces and also to engage either internal or external prevention services. Internal OSH Committees with both workers and managers are becoming more and more prevalent in Moldovan enterprises. In recent times the accident rates have decreased as a result of applying effective legislation, but also due to a change in work culture, where OSH is no longer seen as a cost, but as a necessity. The Labour Inspectorate works actively with other bodies and is working to also encourage businesses to improve OSH through initiatives such as good practice awards. Finally all Labour Inspectors receive training both to improve their competence and to help raise their awareness of issues like corruption to ensure the service is effective.

2.6 Ms Elza Jgerenaia, Head of Labour and Employment Policy Department in Ministry of Labour, Georgia – Current Developments in Georgia

Elza Jgerenaia, Head of Labour and Employment Policy Department in the Georgian Ministry of Labour introduced recent developments in OSH in Georgia. In particular, 2015 saw the establishment of a Labour Inspectorate, with responsibility for OSH and also to raise awareness of the problem of people trafficking. The establishment of the Labour Inspectorate follows a period where no similar body existed, as such a new team of experts needed to be hired from a broad range of backgrounds (lawyers, engineers, economists, hygienists) and also trained. The first training focused on OSH and was conducted with the assistance of EU-OSHA and the ILO and the second training was specifically related to human trafficking and forced labour. Initial inspections were carried out in 100 companies who volunteered for the pilot project. Along with these activities, the Ministry has been preparing new

legislation to harmonise Georgia's OSH regulations with the EU acquis in line with its commitments under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. At this stage legislation transposing the framework directive has been prepared and work on the other Directives will continue in 2016. An awareness raising campaign with the support of EU-OSHA is also underway in Georgia, including the translation of leaflets and the use of Napo films.

2.7 Mr Nizami Ahmadov, State Labour Inspectorate – Current Developments in OSH in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has gone through a period of change since it achieved independence, as was outlined by the Director of the State Labour Inspectorate, Mr Nizami Ahmadov. The signing of the contract of the century with a range of multinational energy companies in the 1990's resulted in a rapid period of modernisation. At the same time the Government has moved to ratify international agreements such as the ILO Conventions and other rules related to OSH. The State Labour Inspectorate has been working to implement better standards and is actively working with international organisations such as IALI, the ILO and EU-OSHA. In 2008 a Regional Association of Labour Inspectors was established, but unfortunately it is now on hold and there is some hope that this can restart in the future. In 2012-14 11,000 inspections were conducted and in 2014 more than 3,000 fines were issued. The Labour Inspectorate is looking to improve standards and also demonstrate that improved OSH will result in better efficiency and savings to businesses. A new system has been introduced in which all employment contracts need to be registered, this is administered by the Labour Inspectorate and will improve the efficiency of the Inspectorate in monitoring workplaces.

2.8 Dr Artak Sahakyan and Dr Hovsep Hovhannisyan, Ministry of Health – Current Developments in OSH in Armenia

In Armenia a new organisation, the State Health Inspectorate was established, with responsibility for OSH and also for labour inspection and epidemiology. It contains 11 regional offices and, while it is part of the Ministry of Health, it is independently administered. The Labour Code in Armenia obliges companies to provide fair working conditions, with articles related to different types of accidents and cases. The intention is to merge more departments and create a new structure, presenting new legislation and a national OSH strategy to the government at the end of 2015. The aim is to link the Armenian strategy to the EU Strategy and other international activities. The existing legal base in Armenia is robust, however, there are some gaps and work is underway to prepare draft decrees to cover these areas in 2016-17.

2.9 Mr Károly György, Hungarian Trade Unions – Developing the National OSH Framework – Hungarian example

Károly György provided a history of Hungary's transition to a new OSH system after the end of the Soviet Union and accession to the EU. Until the nineties, Hungary's OSH system was similar to other countries in the Soviet system. This changed at the end of the Soviet Union and a transition period began, with the introduction of new legislation, the establishment of a State Labour Inspectorate, a National OSH Research body and a national programme for OSH agreed by the parliament. This occurred at the same time as EU accession in 2004 and the introduction of the EU acquis. However, since 2007 the progress has stalled and in some instances reversed with no new national programme. Now, with the collaboration of the government and social partners a new national programme is on the horizon and scheduled to begin in 2016, which will hopefully act as a catalyst for further developments.

2.10 Ms Linda Matisane, Latvian Labour Inspectorate – Legal Framework and Enforcement Systems – Latvian Example

A representative from the Latvian Labour Inspectorate, Linda Matisāne, presented the development of the Latvian OSH system. The current system in Latvia is very different from that which existed in Soviet times, where companies were generally larger and the guiding principle was to provide compensation for poor working conditions. In Latvia now, companies are generally smaller and the guiding principle for OSH management is prevention based on assessing and controlling workplace risks. The turning point came in 2002 with the transposition of the EU OSH Directives via a series of clear steps, working with a tripartite council. Clearly, the legal framework is very important, but creating an OSH culture in workplaces is also essential and a major challenge for the Labour Inspectorate and other stakeholders in Latvia. As such, the Labour Inspectorate acts both to inspect workplaces and also to provide information, through campaigns and conferences, to raise awareness about OSH issues and build the capacity of Latvian workplaces to manage risks.

2.11 Mr Derran Williams, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – Maintaining good OSH standards in development projects

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is an investment bank which undertakes infrastructure projects in a number of countries, including those in the Eastern Partnership. One of their key concerns is to ensure that the projects follow the best OSH practices. Derran Williams, the EBRD's OSH Manager demonstrated how they achieve this by organising capacity building visits and monitoring the sites to ensure the standards are maintained. An example was recent activities in Moldova to help prevent cable strikes in the Electrical Distribution Network. Training was given and equipment was also donated to help with cable avoidance. Their next planned activity will be in Ukraine focused on the Agriculture sector.

2.12 Ms Violaine Roggeri, EU-OSHA – Campaigning on OSH

EU-OSHA undertakes a biannual Healthy Workplaces Campaign, the biggest of its kind in the world, and over the years, the Agency has developed strategies for managing successful OSH campaigns. Some of the key elements of EU-OSHA's campaign is the establishment of a solid and effective network, including social partners, media organisations and enterprises in order to multiply the campaign message. It is also important to ensure that awareness raising activities are timed to ensure a consistent rhythm over the course of the campaign, targeting the message to the appropriate language, both nationally and also at sectoral level. Developing connections with media partners is essential to ensure the message is promoted and good use of social networks has proved to be valuable for EU-OSHA in its campaigning activities.

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

2.13 Gavin Lonergan, Health and Safety Authority – Designing National Awareness Raising Campaigns – Irish Experience

Gavin Lonergan, the Head of Communications at the Health and Safety Authority in Ireland presented the recent awareness raising campaign in Ireland, 'Tools of the Trade', focused on the construction sector. The Irish construction sector historically had a very poor OSH record, which improved significantly in the 2000's. However, 2013 saw another increase in the fatality rate in a period with growing employment after the economic crisis. The campaign was targeted at workers and businesses focusing on key risks, particularly those associated with working at height and machinery. The advertising campaign was conceived in collaboration with social partners and aimed to raise awareness of the serious dangers of working on construction sites. The advertisements do not work in isolation, however, and need to be accompanied by other activities, such as inspection programmes, social media campaigns and stakeholder engagement to ensure they are effective and are targeted to achieve the objectives of the campaign.