

FROM DATA TO DIRECTION: A POLICY ANALYST'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE OSH BAROMETER

Case overview

Alex: Turning data into direction

This case study follows the fictional person Alex, a policy officer working for the European Parliament, creating among others, briefings for policy makers. The purpose is to illustrate how the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)'s OSH Barometer (<https://visualisation.osha.europa.eu/osh-barometer/>) can be used to interpret national and EU wide workplace health and safety trends and convert them into actionable insights.

The case study is based on real data provided by a wide range of official and validated data sources, however the case is fictional, as it was developed by the authors for illustrative purposes, demonstrating how the OSH Barometer can be used by different stakeholders and OSH actors.

After having been informed by a colleague about the OSH Barometer, Alex visits the tool to see how it can assist him in his job. When Alex opens the OSH Barometer he finds five main modules that together provide a comprehensive overview of occupational safety and health (OSH) performance across Europe: **Accidents & Diseases, Working Conditions, Prevention in Companies, OSH Infrastructure** and **Steering of OSH**. For a detailed description of the OSH Barometer's structure, data sources and modules, see Appendix 1. Each of the modules offers interactive charts, country comparisons and direct access to methodological notes and downloadable datasets.

Together, these modules create a transparent, harmonised picture of how the EU and its Member States manage the issues of prevention, exposure and enforcement of workplace risks. Recent numbers shown in the OSH Barometer show that while accident rates have fallen markedly over the past two decades, this trend has levelled off since 2018. At the same time, psychosocial and organisational risks – such as time pressure, emotional strain and challenges linked to digitalisation – are reported to be increasing, particularly in service and knowledge-intensive sectors. The EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027¹ calls for integrated prevention measures that protect workers' physical and mental well-being. The supporting data and evidence on these areas are dispersed across multiple agencies and data systems.

The OSH Barometer brings these sources together into a single analytical environment, integrating data from Eurostat's European Statistics on Accidents at Work (ESAW), Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), EU-OSHA's European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), the OSH Pulse Flash Eurobarometer survey (OSH Pulse) and Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) data on inspections and enforcement capacity. This integration means that Alex can examine outcomes, exposures and institutional resources side by side. He uses the OSH Barometer platform to trace how demands on workers seem to be evolving, whether prevention resources are keeping pace with such changes, and look for where EU-level initiatives can reinforce the overall balance.

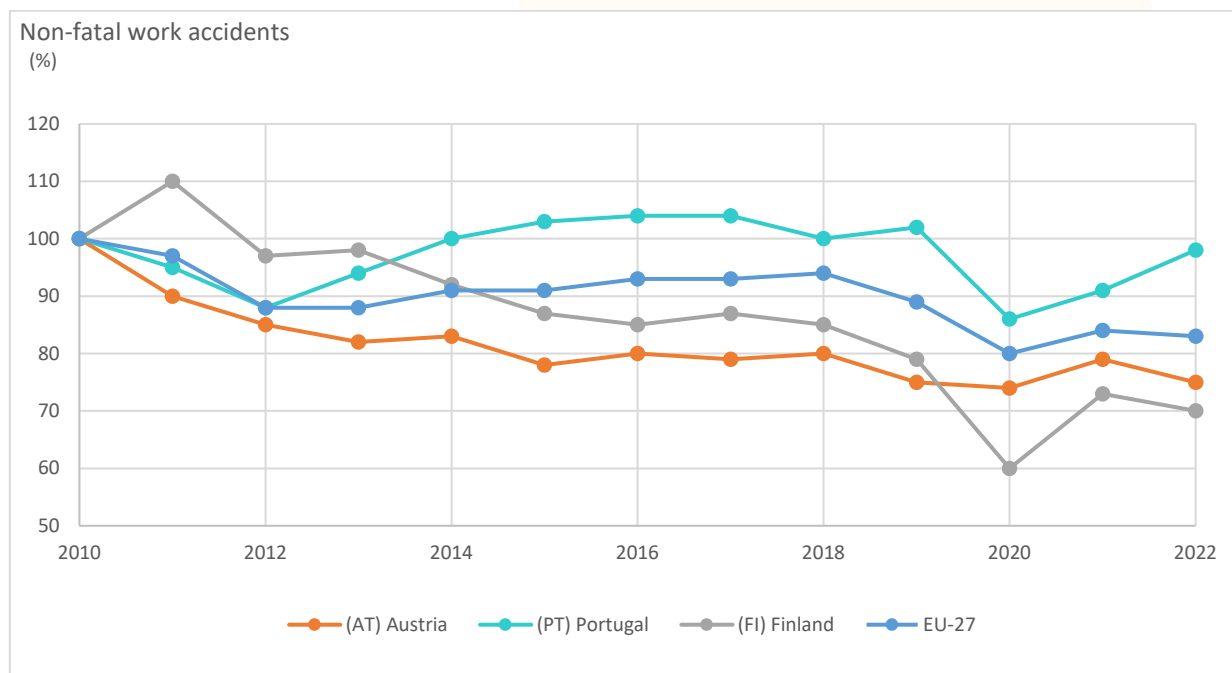
Through this analysis, Alex's case illustrates how the OSH Barometer functions as a practical policy-support and governance tool, turning large, dispersed datasets into actionable intelligence, and facilitating monitoring, benchmarking and foresight. It further helps European decision-makers translate data into directions for establishing safer, healthier and more resilient work practices across the Union.

¹ Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0323&qid=1626089672913#PP1Contents>

The policy question – from recovery to renewal

When Alex begins preparing his briefing for the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), he faces a puzzle. Across the European Union, incidence rates for non-fatal work accidents declined sharply after 2010, yet since 2018 progress has slowed. The **Accidents & Diseases** → **Non-fatal work accidents** chart in the OSH Barometer shows the EU-27 index (2010 = 100) dropping quickly to around 90 by 2012, remaining nearly flat through 2019, dipping during the pandemic and returning to roughly the same level by 2022 (Figure 1). This flattening out does not indicate deterioration, but it does suggest that Europe's earlier pace of improvement has eased, making it important to understand how prevention systems are adapting to current working conditions.

Figure 1. Non-fatal work-accident incidence rates, EU-27 and selected Member States, 2010-2022 (2010 = 100)

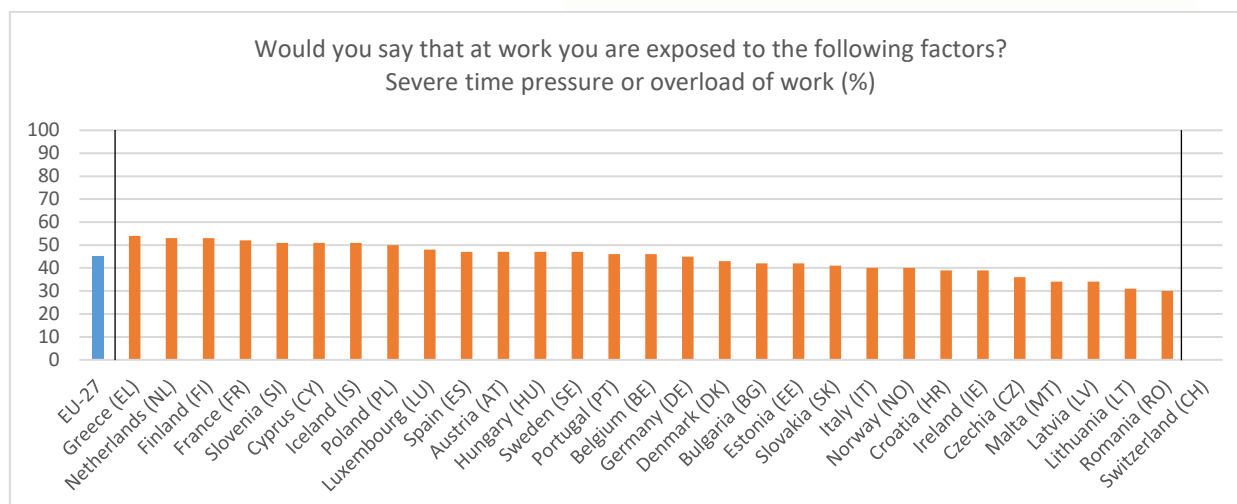


The EU-27 average shows an early decline followed by a persistent plateau. The 2020 dip and rebound in 2022 mark temporary pandemic effects rather than renewed improvement.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Eurostat ESAW 2023 update, retrieved October 2025.

At the same time, Alex observes that new forms of demands on workers become more prominent. To assess the reported psychosocial and organisational demands, he turns to the OSH Pulse dataset in **Working Conditions** → **Psychosocial risks**. While earlier waves of the EWCS offer a long-term perspective, they pre-date the pandemic. By contrast, OSH Pulse provides a more immediate picture of post-COVID working life across the EU-27. For an expert user, selecting the most recent and thematically precise dataset is itself part of the analytical process, and this is supported by the OSH Barometer's ability to tailor data to different policy questions and present it in a visual way.

Viewed together, the indicators illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 show that report of psychosocial demands is a persistent feature of European working life – particularly in the service, education and care sectors, where time pressure, emotional demands and staffing challenges increasingly intersect.

Figure 2. Workers reporting severe time pressure or overload of work, EU-27 (2022)

Forty-six percent of workers report exposure to severe time pressure or work overload, underlining the scale of psychosocial strain in the post-pandemic workplace.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – OSH Pulse 2022, retrieved October 2025.

Figure 3. Workers reporting violence or verbal abuse from customers, patients, or pupils, EU-27 (2022)

Sixteen percent of workers experience client-related abuse, illustrating the emotional dimension of modern work and its implications for psychosocial-risk prevention.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – OSH Pulse 2022, retrieved October 2025.

For Alex, the contrast between stabilising accident trends and rising psychosocial demands underscores why a comprehensive view of OSH – spanning physical, organisational and mental well-being dimensions – is central to contemporary policy-making.

Strategic context: EU priorities for renewal

Exploring the **Steering of OSH** → **National Strategies** module, Alex reviews the EU-wide *National Strategies Mapping – EU-27*. It summarises the **EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027**, which sets out three cross-cutting objectives:

1. **Anticipate and manage change** arising from the green, digital and demographic transitions.
2. **Improve prevention** of workplace accidents and occupational diseases.
3. **Increase preparedness** for future health crises.

These priorities are supported by coordinated action on social dialogue, evidence-strengthening, enforcement, awareness-raising and funding through EU programmes such as ESF+², ERDF³, EU4Health⁴ and Horizon Europe⁵. The Strategic Framework highlights psychosocial risks, ageing workforces and digitalisation as emerging areas requiring sustained attention, positioning OSH as a central element of Europe's broader resilience agenda.

For Alex, this strategic overview allows him to situate the barometer within a wider policy context. The **purpose** of the OSH Barometer is not to assess national strategies but to provide **harmonised indicators** that allow policy-makers to monitor trends relevant to these objectives. By bringing together comparable data on exposures, prevention measures and system capacity, the OSH Barometer offers a factual basis that can complement national and EU-level policy cycles.

This alignment between policy priorities and available data makes it easier for Alex to turn dispersed information into structured insights. The data and information underscore that Europe's current task is not only to recover from recent disruptions but to continue strengthening preventive systems so that they evolve in step with changing work environments. In Alex's view, this integrated perspective – linking strategy documents with harmonised data – supports more informed and forward-looking OSH governance across the Union.

Interpreting the evidence – a multi-level view of OSH

To move beyond description and into the area of interpretation, Alex begins exploring the resources offered by the OSH Barometer, which integrates Europe's major occupational safety and health datasets into a single analytical environment. This integration allows users to view outcomes, exposures and elements of preventive capacity within one coherent platform.

To help identify how these layers relate to one another, Alex uses the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework as a simple structuring lens. For a detailed explanation of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and its relevance to occupational safety and health, see the 'Deep-dive Box: The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model' below. Rather than treating the JD-R framework as an evaluative model, Alex uses it to keep track of the broad categories represented across the OSH Barometer:

- **Demands**, understood as pressures requiring sustained effort (e.g., workload, time pressure, physical or psychosocial risks); and
- **Resources**, meaning the support available to manage those pressures (e.g., training, supervision, ergonomic measures, organisational procedures or institutional capacity).

Following this logic of balance between demands and resources, assists Alex in deciding what to look for in the OSH Barometer data – where demands (pressures) appear to be increasing, which resources (supports) are reported, and how these elements develop across the different layers of the OSH system.

The OSH Barometer modules map neatly onto this structure. **Working Conditions** visualises reported job-level stresses such as time pressure, exposure to hazards or frequent client interaction. **Prevention in Companies** presents organisational-level measures, including risk-assessment practices, OSH training and psychosocial-risk management. **OSH Infrastructure** and **Steering of OSH** provide information on system-level support factors such as inspection capacity, enforcement reach and national-strategy coordination. Finally, **Accidents & Diseases** shows the outcomes that reflect overall OSH performance.

²European Social Fund+: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-social-fund_en

³European Regional Development Fund: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

⁴EU4Health programme 2021-2027 – a vision for a healthier European Union: https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en

⁵Horizon Europe: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

Because the OSH Barometer brings together multiple European datasets in one place, it enables users to explore different aspects of OSH in just a few clicks. Each dataset contributes a complementary perspective: ESAW shows long-term accident trends; OSH Pulse captures recent psychosocial demands; ESENER illustrates how employers manage prevention; SLIC data highlight institutional capacity. By combining these sources, the barometer allows for movement between levels of analysis – connecting outcomes, exposures and organisational or institutional measures.

By moving methodically through the OSH Barometer's modules – from **Accidents & Diseases** (outcomes) to **Working Conditions** (pressures), **Prevention in Companies** (organisational measures) and **OSH Infrastructure** plus **Steering of OSH** (system-level supports) – Alex reconstructs how different elements of Europe's OSH landscape relate to each other. This multi-level mapping does not prescribe conclusions, but it enables him to see where demands and resources may evolve at different speeds and where policy-makers may wish to direct particular attention.

In this way, the OSH Barometer translates large-scale statistics into a structured overview of Europe's OSH system, helping policy-makers navigate complex data and identify areas that merit further examination in the course of developing or revising prevention strategies.

Organisational and system resources: prevention capacity and infrastructure

After examining the demands that are reported by workers or employers to be facing Europe's workforce, Alex turns to the question of whether prevention capacity has evolved in line with these demands. Within the OSH Barometer, this corresponds to two further dimensions of the OSH system: organisational measures – set out in the **Prevention in companies** module – and system-level resources – presented in **OSH Infrastructure**.

To explore organisational resources, Alex opens **Working conditions and prevention** → **Prevention in companies** → **Risk assessment**. Because the ESENER waves do not represent a continuous time series but form separate cross-sectional surveys, the OSH Barometer displays ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019 side by side. In the 2014 view, around 75 % of EU-27 establishments report carrying out regular risk assessments, while for micro-enterprises (5-9 employees) the figure is 67% %. Re-running the visualisation for 2019, Alex observes modest increases: the EU-27 average rises to roughly 77 %, and coverage among small firms to about 70 % (Figures 4a and 4b). Progress is visible, but largely incremental, and the smallest firms consistently report lower implementation rates than larger businesses. Viewed together, the two dashboards highlight how the spread of basic prevention practices continues, but at a slower pace than earlier in the decade.

Figure 4a. Establishments regularly carrying out workplace risk assessments, EU-27 (ESENER 2014)

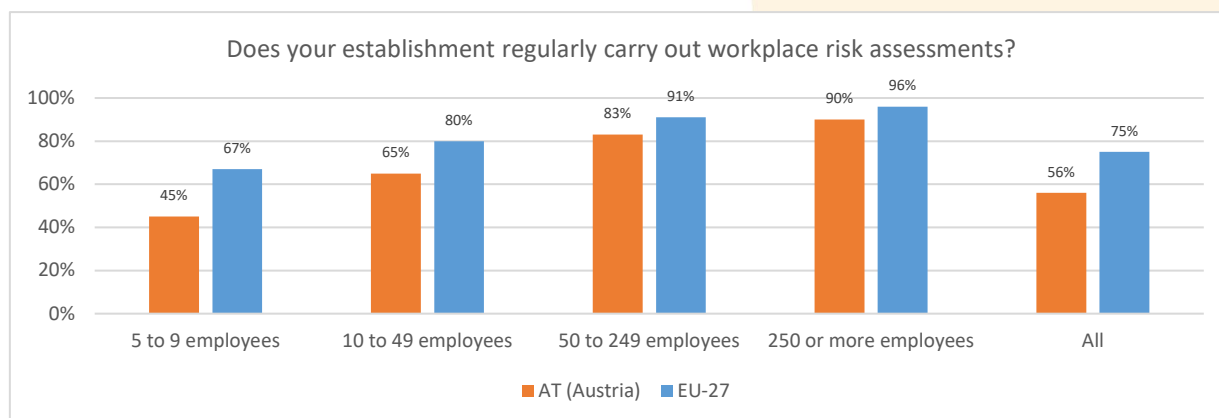
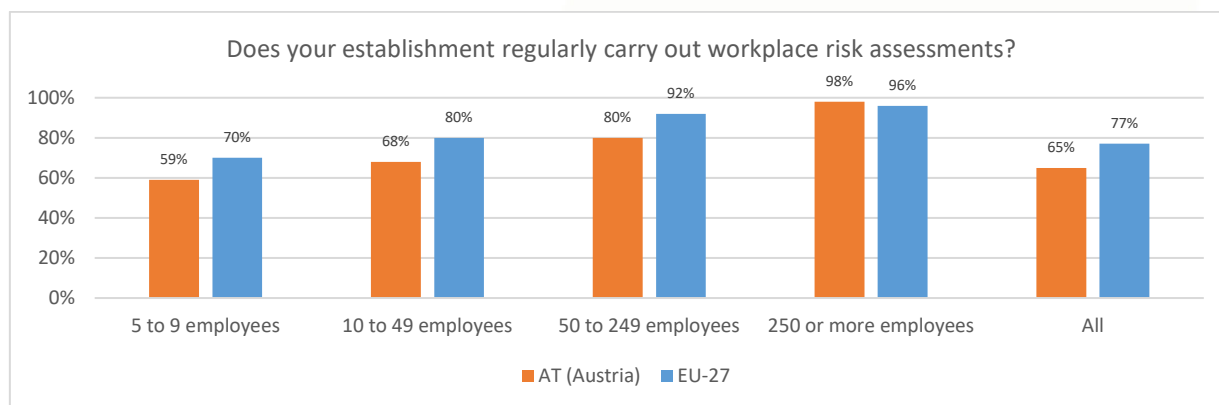


Figure 4b. Establishments regularly carrying out workplace risk assessments, EU-27 (ESENER 2019)



Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Working conditions and prevention → Prevention in companies → Risk assessment (ESENER 2014 and 2019), retrieved October 2025.

Next, Alex examines whether companies report having the knowledge needed to address psychosocial risks. Navigating to **Evaluated aspects in risk assessments** → **Emerging risks and their management** → ‘Sufficient information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments’, he focuses on the EU-27 results from ESENER. The indicator shows that 64.1 % of establishments in 2019 state they have sufficient information (compared to 67.4% in 2024), with only slightly lower figures among micro-enterprises (around 62 %). This suggests that while awareness of psychosocial risks has become more widespread, the practical capability to integrate them into systematic risk assessment remains uneven.

When Alex views the indicator by country, he sees substantial variation: some Member States report that over 70 % of establishments have such information, while for others the figure remains below 50 %. As with many ESENER indicators and indicators in the OSH Barometer, this variation does not indicate performance in a normative sense but helps identify areas where additional knowledge exchange or coordination could support implementation (Figure 5.).

Figure 5. Availability of information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments, EU-27 (ESENER 2019)

ESENER 2019

Emerging risks and their management / Sufficient information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments

This item is available in other national versions (IE) Ireland

Sufficient information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments

You pointed out that your workplace carries out risk assessments. Do you have sufficient information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments?

1 Yes

2 No

9 No answer

Question asked to those establishments that report carrying out risk assessments regularly.

Select

Activity sector

All

Establishment size

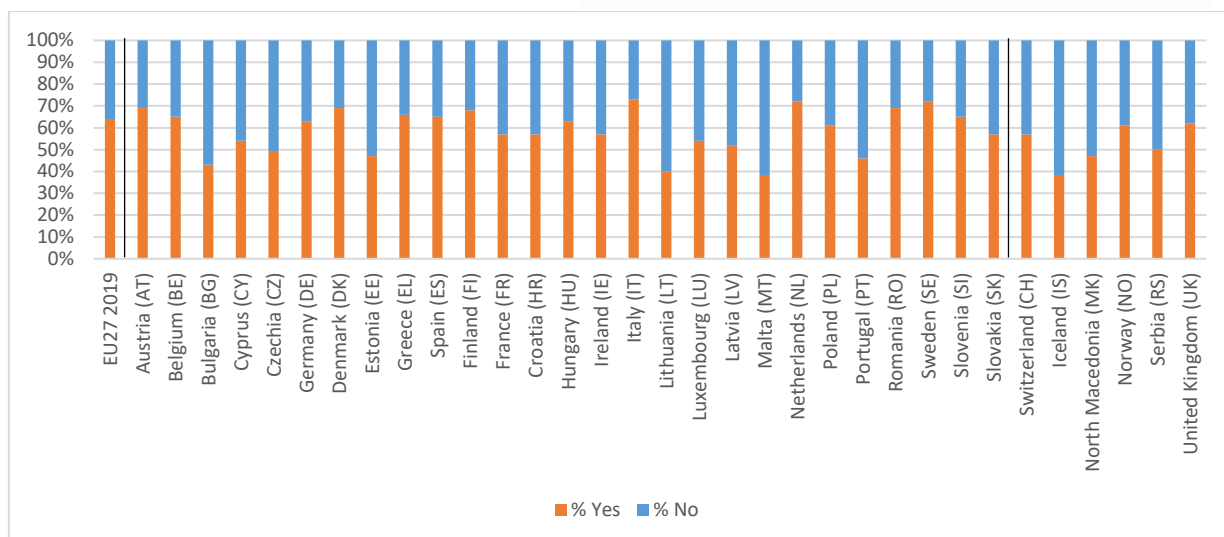
All

Country

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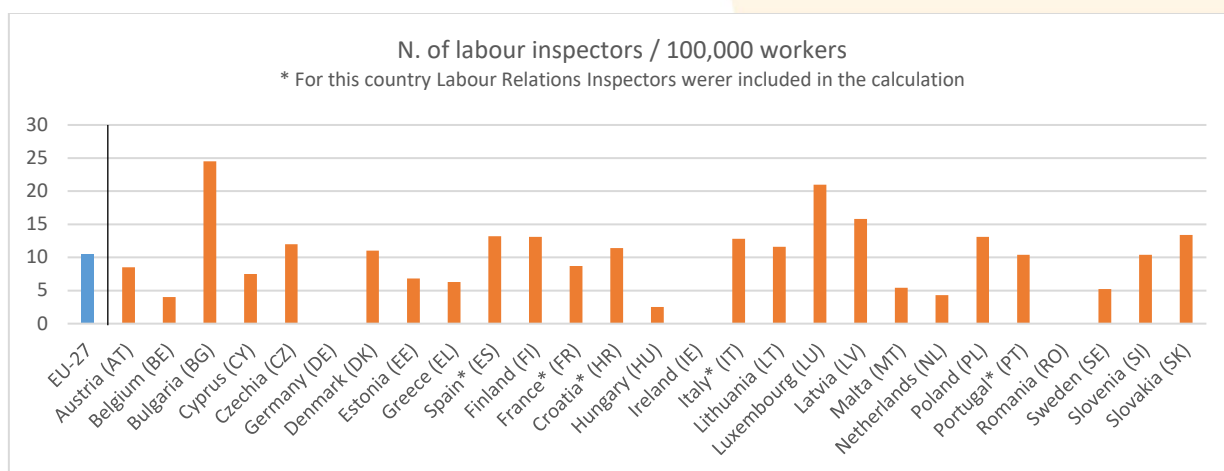
Across the EU-27, 64.1 % of establishments state they have sufficient information to include psychosocial risks in their risk assessments, but among micro-enterprises the proportion is 62 %. The data highlight continuing capacity gaps in smaller organisations, where limited expertise constrains psychosocial-risk prevention

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Working conditions and prevention → Prevention in companies → Evaluated aspects in risk assessments → Emerging risks and their management → ‘Sufficient information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments’, retrieved October 2025.

To assess system-level resources, Alex moves to **OSH Infrastructure → Enforcement capacity**. The indicator ‘Enterprises visited by the Labour Inspectorate in the last five years (ESENER 2019)’ illustrates how inspection activity reaches companies of different sizes. Across the EU-27, roughly four out of five large enterprises (250+ employees) report at least one inspection during this period, compared with just over half of micro-enterprises. This pattern highlights how inspection reach varies with establishment size – a reflection of differing capacities, risk profiles and national organisational structures.

Alex then examines the **Labour inspectors per 100,000 workers** map (SLIC 2021 data). The EU-27 average is **10.6 inspectors** per 100,000 workers, but Member States vary widely (Figure 6). The map does not provide an assessment of national systems but rather offers a comparative context for understanding how enforcement resources are distributed.

Figure 6. Labour inspectors per 100,000 workers, selected Member States (2021)



The EU-27 average is 10.6 inspectors per 100,000 workers (Portugal 10.5, Spain 13.2, Finland 13.2). The map reveals substantial variation in enforcement capacity across Europe.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – OSH Infrastructure → Enforcement capacity (SLIC 2021), retrieved October 2025.

By switching between these interactive dashboards – organisational measures in ESENER and institutional resources in SLIC data – Alex builds a multi-layered overview of Europe's OSH system. Each visualisation helps him see how organisational practices and system capacity relate to exposures and outcomes without implying direct causation. Rather than offering a verdict, the OSH Barometer structures the evidence in a way that helps policy-makers identify where support may be strongest, where it may be weaker, and where further analysis or coordination could be most useful.

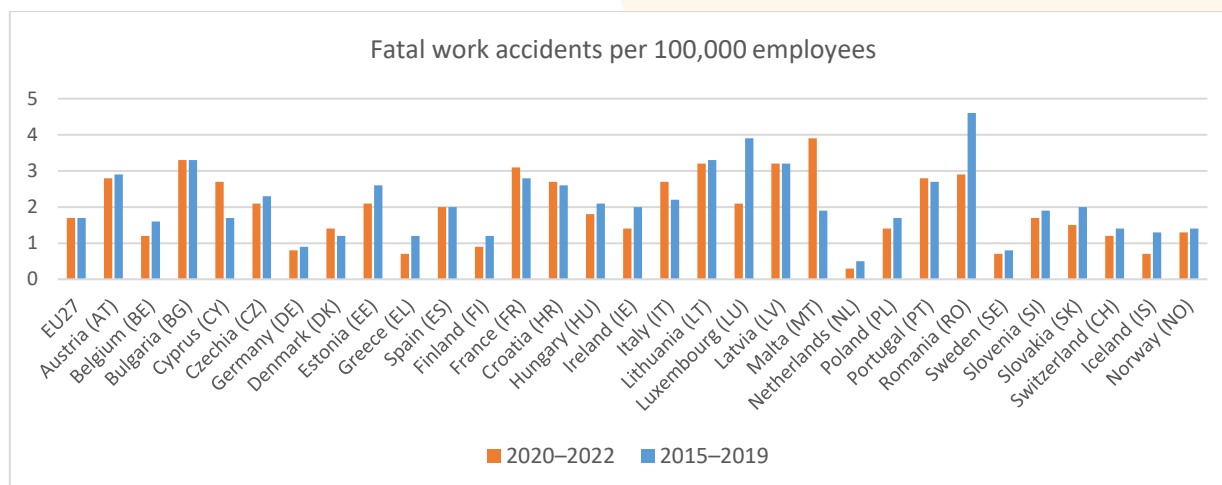
Diagnosing stagnation – cross-level patterns

By moving from outcomes to organisational and system-level indicators, Alex begins to assemble a multi-layered overview of Europe's OSH landscape. Rather than pointing to a single cause, the OSH Barometer allows him to compare how different elements of the OSH system have evolved and how they relate to one another.

Outcomes – accidents plateauing

Alex starts with **Accidents & Diseases** → **Fatal work accidents per 100,000 employees**. Figure 7 displays the most recent Eurostat data comparing the periods 2015–2019 and 2020–2022. The EU-27 average remains close to 1.7 in both periods, with only minor year-to-year variation. Several Member States – for example Finland and Spain – show slightly lower rates, while Portugal stays close to the EU-27 level. The figures indicate that, at the EU level, fatal-accident rates have remained broadly stable in recent years.

Figure 7. Fatal work accidents per 100,000 employees, 2015–2019 vs 2020–2022



Fatal-accident rates have stabilised across the EU-27, suggesting that the long downward trend has plateaued.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Eurostat ESAW 2015–2022.

Demands – physical and ergonomic exposures remain constant

To explore whether this stability in outcomes coincides with stability in workers reported exposures, Alex turns to **Working Conditions** → **Ergonomic risks** (EWCS 2010 and 2015). Because EWCS provides cross-sectional snapshots rather than annual series, the OSH Barometer displays the 2010 and 2015 radar charts side by side (Figures 8a and 8b). Across the EU-28 (as 2010 and 2015 data also included the UK), the indicators show modest differences: the proportion of workers reporting tiring or painful positions decreases from 47 % to 43 %, while the figure for those exposed to repetitive movements dips from 64 % to 61 %. With regard to these physical-demand indicators, the overall impression is one of limited change over the period.

Figure 8a. Ergonomic risks, EU-28 and Austria (2010)

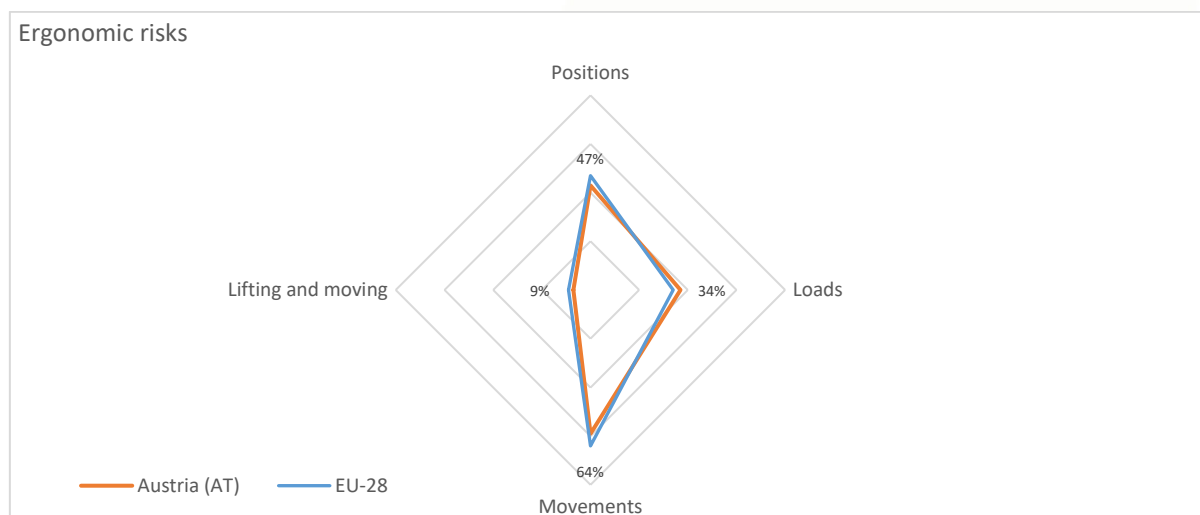
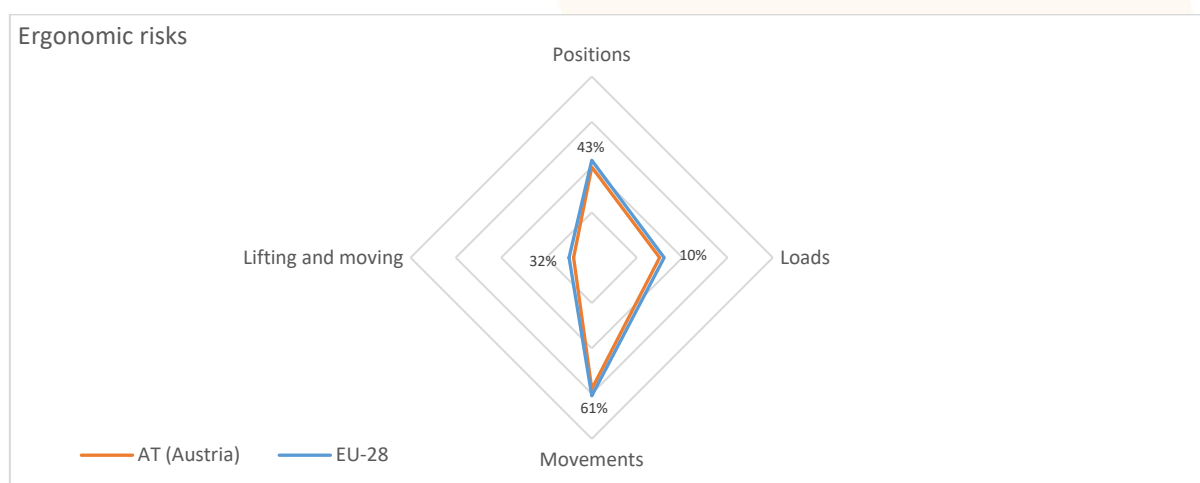


Figure 8b. Ergonomic risks, EU-28 and Austria (2015)



Despite technological advances, exposure to tiring positions and repetitive movements remains high and nearly unchanged.
Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Eurofound EWCS 2010 and 2015.

Organisational resources – risk-assessment coverage developing gradually

Next, Alex examines **Prevention in Companies** → **Workplace risk assessments** (ESENER 2014 and 2019). As ESENER waves are also cross-sectional, the dashboards show two separate EU-27 pictures. In 2014, around **75 %** of establishments report regular risk assessments; in 2019 this rises slightly to about **77 %** (**Figures 4a and 4b**). Coverage among micro-enterprises increases from roughly **67 %** to **70 %**, while large enterprises remain close to **96 %** in both waves.

These small shifts suggest a gradual rather than a rapid expansion in reported organisational prevention measures, while the difference between establishment sizes persists across both datasets.

System resources – variation in enforcement capacity

To explore system-level resources, Alex reviews **OSH Infrastructure** → **Enforcement capacity**. Figure 10 shows the number of labour inspectors per 100,000 workers (reference year 2021). The EU-27 average stands at **10.6**, with Member States ranging from fewer than **5** to more than **20** inspectors per 100,000 workers. Countries such as Portugal (10.5), Spain (13.2) and Finland (13.2) sit close to or above

the average (Figure 6). The map does not rate performance but illustrates differences in institutional capacity across the EU.

Interpreting cross-level patterns

Bringing these layers together – namely, outcomes (ESAW), exposures (EWCS), organisational measures (ESENER) and elements of system capacity (SLIC) – Alex sees that many indicators change only gradually across waves. Accident trends are broadly stable, ergonomic exposures show limited variation between 2010 and 2015, risk-assessment coverage develops incrementally, and enforcement capacity differs across Member States without a clear upward trend.

From Alex's perspective, this multi-level mapping does not prescribe conclusions, but it helps him recognise where different elements of Europe's OSH system may be evolving at different speeds. Thus, the Job Demands-Resources framework, while not providing an explanatory model for the data, offers a simple way for him to structure this comparison – as a balance between demands (pressure) and resources (support). In terms of policy-making, this layered view can highlight areas that may merit closer attention or further analysis as Member States work to strengthen prevention systems in line with evolving workplace challenges.

Emerging demands – psychosocial and digital risks

After reviewing traditional OSH indicators, Alex turns to new and emerging pressures – in particular, psychosocial load and digital-era work intensification. The **Working Conditions → Psychosocial risks** module of the OSH Barometer visualises these exposures using the post-pandemic **OSH Pulse 2022** dataset. These indicators provide a recent snapshot of workers' self-reported experiences across the EU-27.

Rising psychosocial load

As presented, figure 2 shows that **46 %** of EU-27 workers report severe time pressure or work overload. This makes work intensity one of the most commonly reported psychosocial exposures in Europe. Sectors with high client contact, time-sensitive tasks or complex coordination requirements – such as healthcare, education and customer services – tend to display higher-than-average levels, reflecting the demanding nature of these roles.

Emotional and interpersonal strain

A second OSH Pulse indicator (Figure 3) shows that **16 %** of EU-27 workers report exposure to violence or verbal abuse from customers, patients or pupils. Although less prevalent than time pressure, this type of third-party aggression has significant emotional consequences and appears to be concentrated in public-facing occupations.

Interpretation – understanding emerging demands

Taken together, these indicators show that psychosocial demands (pressures) form a substantial part of contemporary working life across the EU-27. From Alex's perspective, the Job Demands-Resources framework offers a simple way to organise these observations: psychosocial demands – such as time pressure, emotional labour and client interaction – have now become more prominent in the reporting alongside traditional physical and ergonomic risks. Organisational and system-level prevention measures, however, have historically focused more on physical hazards.

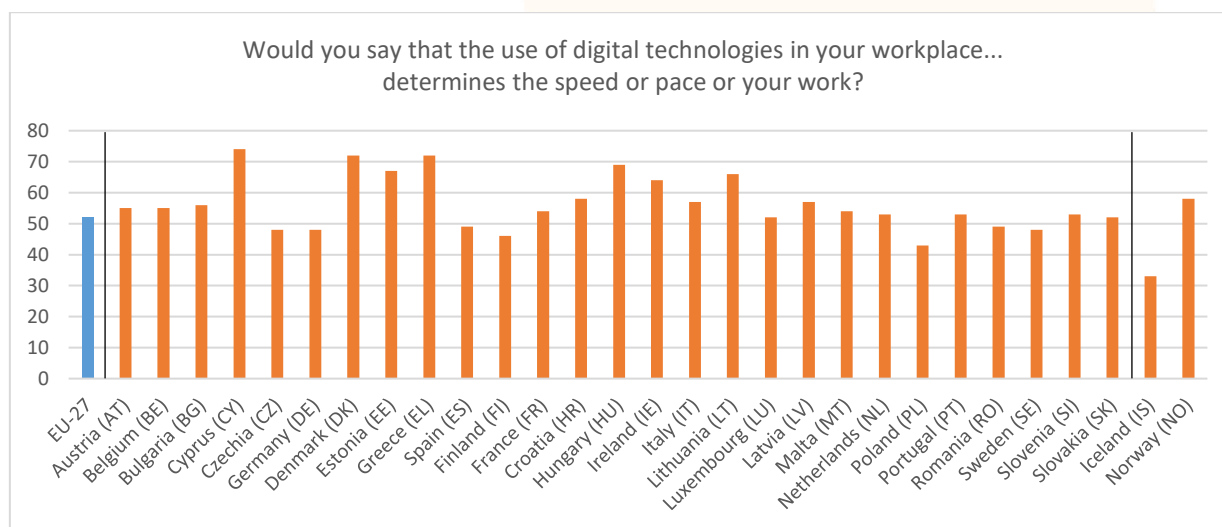
This contrast does not imply a judgement on performance but rather highlights that psychosocial risks are receiving increasing attention in national and EU-level strategies. For Alex, these indicators underscore the importance of ensuring that prevention approaches continue to evolve alongside changes in work organisation.

Digital-era work intensification

Digitalisation also plays a role in shaping work characteristics. According to **OSH Pulse 2022**, **52 %** of EU-27 workers report that digital technologies determine the speed or pace of their work (Figure 9). This suggests that digital tools are becoming increasingly integrated into task coordination and workflow management. While such tools can improve efficiency, they may also influence how work is structured and paced.

Alex views these developments through the same organising logic prism: digital tools can introduce new forms of cognitive or temporal demands, depending on how they are implemented. Organisational measures – such as autonomy in task scheduling, clarity in performance expectations and participatory approaches to technological change – help to determine how these tools affect everyday work.

Figure 9. Use of digital technologies determining the speed or pace of work, EU-27 (OSH Pulse 2022)



Fifty-two percent of workers say that digital tools determine their work pace, confirming that digitalisation has become a systemic driver of work intensity across the Union.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Working Conditions → Digitalisation Risks → Effects of digitalisation → 'Use of digital technologies determining the speed or pace of work', OSH Pulse Flash Eurobarometer 2022, retrieved October 2025.

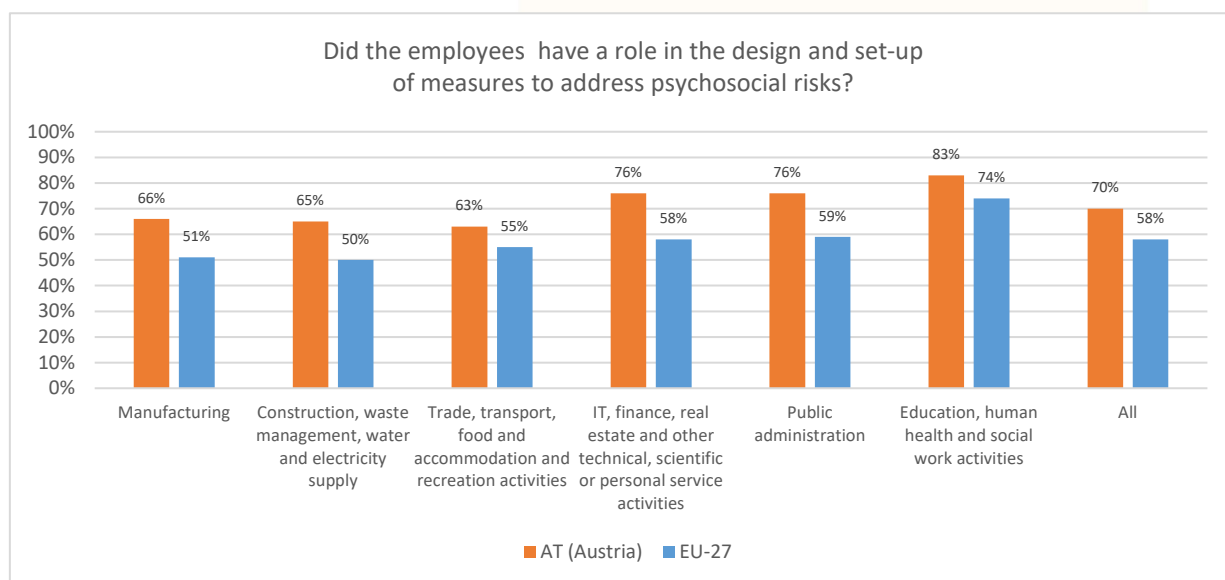
From data to policy argument – building the brief

Having examined indicators across outcomes, exposures, organisational practices and system capacity, Alex's next task is to structure this information into a coherent briefing for EMPL. The OSH Barometer provides the scaffolding for this work, bringing together harmonised data from multiple levels of the OSH system and allowing Alex to situate emerging demands – such as psychosocial load and digitalisation – alongside long-standing organisational and institutional measures. To organise this material thematically, Alex continues to use the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework as a simple way of grouping indicators into demands (pressure) and Resources (support), without treating it as an evaluative model. His central inquiry is whether Europe's prevention infrastructure is keeping pace with the rapidly shifting landscape of the world of work.

Alex begins with **Prevention in companies → Employees' participation in prevention**. According to **ESENER 2019**, **58 %** of EU-27 establishments report that employees had a role in designing measures to address psychosocial risks, while using Austria as a comparative example to illustrate regional disparities, he notices that the figure is around **70 % (Figure 10)**. As with many ESENER indicators, coverage varies by establishment size and sector.

For Alex, this indicator highlights an aspect of organisational practice that can support effective psychosocial-risk management – involving workers in shaping preventive measures. Engagement of workers can help organisations respond to psychosocial challenges in a way that fits their specific work processes. The variation across countries and sectors suggests that participatory practices are more established in some contexts than others, and that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may face particular challenges in this area.

Figure 10. Employees involved in the design and set-up of measures to address psychosocial risks, EU-27 (ESENER 2019)



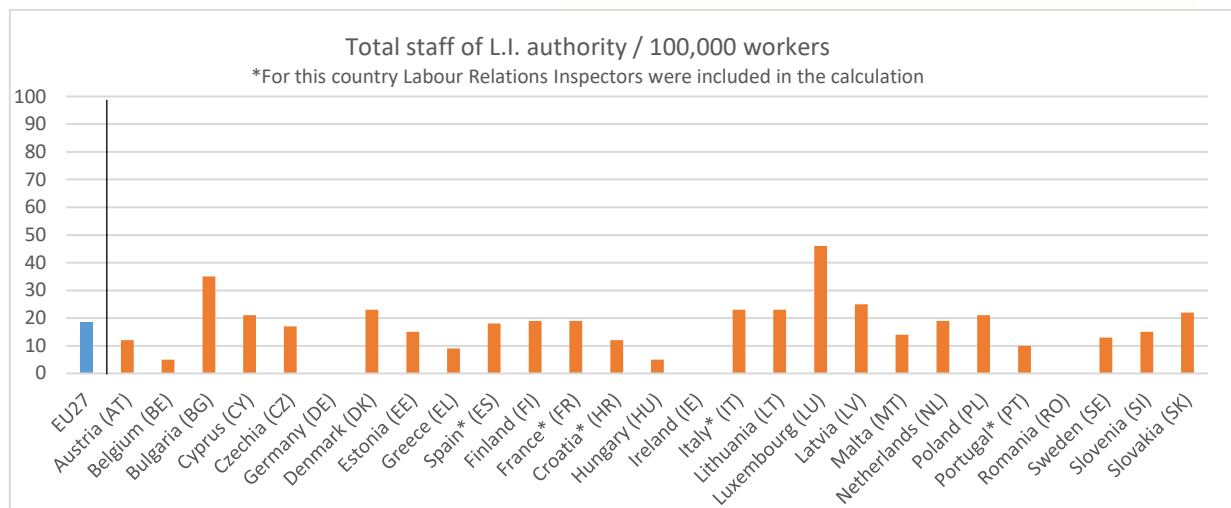
Fifty-eight percent of establishments report employee participation in psychosocial-risk prevention, with higher involvement in Austria (70%). Participation remains uneven across sectors and company sizes.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Working conditions and prevention → Prevention in companies → Employees' participation in prevention → 'Did employees have a role in the design and set-up of measures to address psychosocial risks?', ESENER 2019, retrieved October 2025.

Next, Alex reviews **OSH Infrastructure → Enforcement capacity**, focusing on the indicator showing the total staff of national labour-inspection authorities. The SLIC 2021 data indicate an EU-27 average of about 18 inspection staff per 100,000 workers, with considerable variation observed among Member States (Figure 11). As the OSH Barometer notes, this indicator includes all labour-inspection personnel – not only OSH specialists – and therefore differs from the staff-per-population measure shown earlier.

For Alex, this indicator provides a context for understanding how institutional capacity is organised across the Union. Differences in staffing levels may reflect national administrative structures, inspection mandates and strategic priorities. While the OSH Barometer does not assess adequacy, it helps Alex appreciate how institutional resources vary between countries – information that is useful when considering the implementation of OSH legislation or support measures.

Figure 11. Total staff of labour-inspection authorities, EU-27 (SLIC 2021)



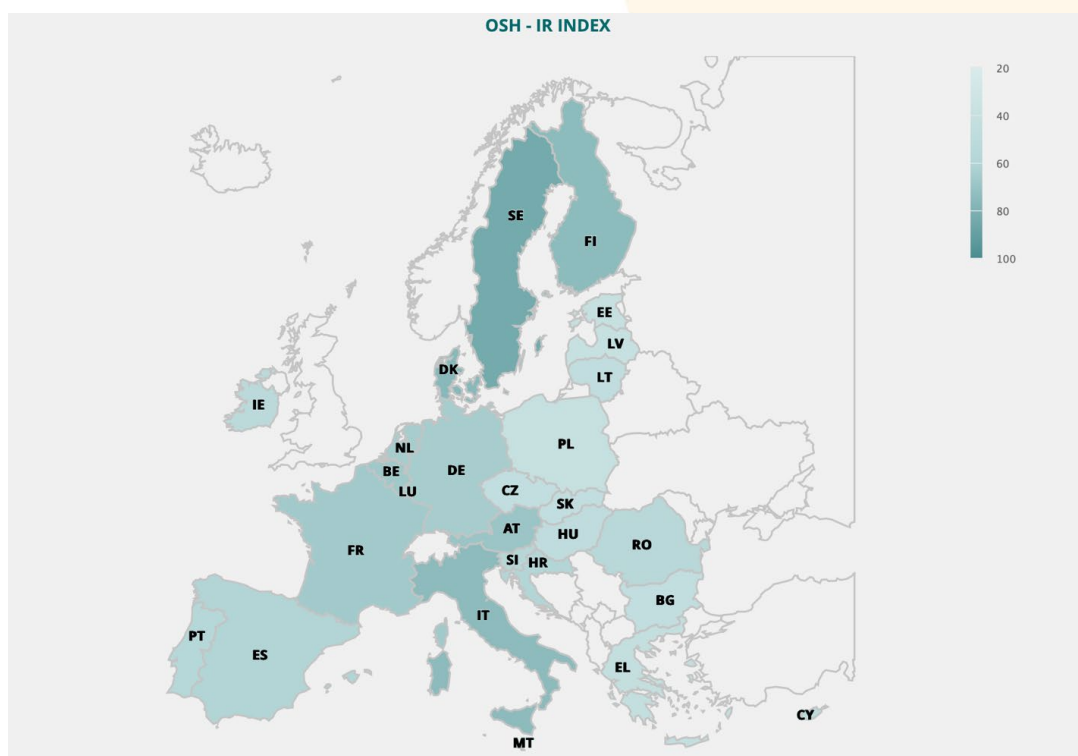
Includes all inspection personnel (labour-relations and OSH staff). Note that this indicator differs from Figure 6, which shows only OSH inspectors per 100,000 workers.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer → OSH Infrastructure → Enforcement capacity, retrieved October 2025.

Alex then consults **Steering of OSH → Social dialogue**, which includes the **OSH - IR Index**, a composite indicator summarising selected dimensions of OSH-related social-partner involvement. The map (Figure 12) shows that most Member States achieve relatively high index values, with some variation seen across the EU-27.

For Alex, this indicator provides an overview of the institutional landscape in which OSH policies are developed. Social-dialogue arrangements differ across Europe, and understanding this diversity helps to contextualise how prevention measures are debated, implemented and renewed. The index does not evaluate performance but summarises the structural features of national social-dialogue systems.

Figure 12. Social-dialogue indicator (OSH - IR Index), EU-27 (2021)



Most Member States record high OSH - IR Index values, indicating broadly established tripartite dialogue in occupational safety and health, with the strongest scores seen in the Nordic countries and relatively weaker values in parts of Southern and Eastern Europe.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Steering of OSH → Social dialogue → Social dialogue indicator (OSH– IR Index), retrieved October 2025.

Finally, Alex examines **Steering of OSH → National strategies**, where each Member State's OSH strategy is summarised in a harmonised interface. The module provides information on strategic objectives, priority areas, implementation actors and monitoring approaches (Figure 13). While many strategies have been renewed in line with the **EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027**, their thematic emphases differ. Some place a strong focus on psychosocial risks or digitalisation, while others prioritise traditional OSH areas.

For Alex, these differences illustrate the diversity of national approaches within a shared European policy framework. The OSH Barometer helps him link high-level policy documents with the statistical indicators he has explored, providing a clearer picture of how Member States articulate their preventive priorities.

Figure 13. Overview of national OSH strategies (EU-27, 2025)

Structure of each National strategy

National strategies are well known as a policy instrument to enhance the effectiveness of an OSH system through the collaborative and smart use of resources. You will find here a short and harmonised description of national OSH-strategies. During the first quarter of 2023 EU-OSHA is updating this section in collaboration with the Member States. If a strategy was not updated the previous strategy description is maintained - based on the [mapping report of EU-OSHA](#) from 2019..

For further information refer to [Methodology](#)



Basic information

Background

Characteristics and objectives

Details and activity

Actors and stakeholders

Resources and timeframe

Evaluation

DATA FOR >

COMPARE WITH >

AND >

EU27

COUNTRY

Country



Basic information

Download strategy description

In the European Union, multi-annual strategies on occupational safety and health (OSH) are used to develop the EU policy on OSH and coordinate the national policies of the Member States. The OSH...

The Steering of OSH → National Strategies module provides harmonised profiles and direct links to each Member State's OSH strategy, illustrating how the OSH Barometer connects statistical indicators with policy frameworks.

Source: EU-OSHA OSH Barometer – Steering of OSH → National Strategies → EU 27 Mapping, retrieved October 2025.

By combining indicators from exposures, organisational measures, institutional capacity and national strategies, Alex develops a structured overview of the areas he might wish to highlight in his parliamentary briefing. Rather than drawing causal conclusions, he uses the JD-R lens to organise the evidence: certain psychosocial and digital pressures are widely reported; organisational practices supporting prevention differ across establishments; and institutional frameworks vary between Member States. From this overview, Alex identifies several themes that could inform policy discussion:

- Continuing to support organisations – especially SMEs – in implementing participatory and comprehensive psychosocial-risk management;
- Ensuring that labour-inspection services and social-dialogue structures are equipped to address evolving forms of work; and
- Maintaining strategic alignment across Member States as national OSH strategies are updated.

In this way, the OSH Barometer helps Alex translate diverse evidence into a clear briefing structure, linking statistical indicators with policy considerations in a way that supports informed debate within EMPL.

Deepening potential – sources for further analysis

For Alex, preparing the briefing note is not the end of the process but the beginning of a broader analytical approach. Working with the OSH Barometer has shown him how bringing together data on accidents, working conditions, prevention practices, institutional arrangements and national strategies can support a structured understanding of Europe's OSH landscape. What started as a comparison of indicators becomes, for him, a way to follow developments across different layers of the system and to organise data for policy dialogue.

The OSH Barometer's modular structure helps Alex consider how different forms of pressure and types of preventive measures evolve. The Job Demands-Resources framework provides him with a simple way of classifying this information into the categories of demands (pressure) and resources (support), without making claims about causality or system performance. As new datasets such as ESENER, OSH Pulse, EWCS or ESAW are updated, Alex sees opportunities to revisit these categories and reflect on how reported exposures, organisational measures and system-level arrangements might develop over time.

He also notes the OSH Barometer's value as a communication tool. Its visual dashboards enable easier discussions of complex indicators among Members of the European Parliament, national focal point representatives⁶, researchers and social partners. By presenting information in a harmonised format, the platform helps ensure that policy conversations begin from a shared empirical basis. In Alex's view, this common reference point strengthens dialogue by allowing stakeholders to explore how different parts of the OSH system relate to one another.

Looking ahead, Alex imagines using the OSH Barometer to support recurring reviews of prevention-related indicators as new topics emerge – for example, remote work, climate-related risks or the growing influence of digital technologies. The same organising logic can be applied to these areas, helping policy-makers understand how new forms of work intersect with existing prevention structures.

Alex concludes that sustaining effective prevention requires continuous attention to how work and risk evolve. The OSH Barometer already supports this task by combining data on exposures, organisational practices and institutional capacity into a single interface. By offering a harmonised presentation of data and a platform for shared understanding, the OSH Barometer helps policy-makers and social partners identify emerging issues, track developments and relate them to ongoing strategic efforts.

For an extended analysis of long-term developments in European OSH, Alex refers readers to *Occupational Safety and Health in Europe: State and Trends 2023* (EU-OSHA, 2023), which complements the OSH Barometer by examining broader patterns of change over time.

⁶ The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is a network organisation, with a "focal point" in each Member States as well as in European Free Trade Association (EFTA) States and candidate and potential candidate countries. This enables EU-OSHA to be more successful in the creation of healthier, safer, and more productive workplaces by permitting a greater sharing of information. For more information visit: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/about-eu-osha/national-focal-points/focal-points-index>

Deep-dive box: the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

What is the JD-R Model?

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023; Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel 2023) is a leading framework in occupational health psychology for understanding how work -characteristics affect employee well-being, motivation and performance.

- **Job demands** are aspects of work that require sustained physical or psychological effort (e.g., workload, time pressure, emotional demands, physical strain). High demands can exhaust employees and impair their health.
- **Job resources** are aspects of work that help achieve goals, reduce demands or stimulate growth (e.g., autonomy, social support, training, feedback).

Levels of demands and resources

According to Demerouti and Bakker (2023), demands and resources exist at multiple levels:

- **Personal** (e.g., resilience, optimism)
- **Family** (e.g., support at home)
- **Job** (e.g., workload, supervisor support)
- **Organisational** (e.g., policies, culture)
- **State/national** (e.g., legislation, inspection capacity)

Two key processes in the JD-R Model

1. **Health Impairment Process:**
Excessive job demands lead to strain, exhaustion and health problems.
2. **Motivational Process:**
Abundant job resources foster engagement, motivation and positive outcomes.

Interaction effects

Resources can mitigate the negative impact of demands. For example, high social support can reduce the harmful effects of high workload. Conversely, risk factors (e.g., discrimination, poor communication) act as additional demands, further exhausting employees and impairing health.

Explaining the OSH Barometer figure through the JD-R lens

The measures included in the OSH Barometer can be organised into categories that align with the JD-R framework:

- **Demands:**
Physical, psychosocial and organisational pressures (e.g., exposure to noise, repetitive movements, time pressure).
- **Resources:**
Supports at various levels (e.g., training, ergonomic equipment, supervision, national OSH strategies, inspection capacity).
- **Risk Factors:**
Additional demands such as discrimination, harassment, poor communication or contextual/personal vulnerabilities. These amplify the health impairment process.
- **Outcomes:**
Health and safety results (e.g., accident rates, musculoskeletal disorders, job satisfaction, self-rated health).

Logic of categorisation

- **Demands and risk factors** are grouped as pressures that can exhaust employees and lead to negative outcomes.
- **Resources** are grouped as supports that can buffer demands, promote motivation and improve outcomes.
- **Outcomes** reflect the balance (or imbalance) between demands, resources and risk factors.

Function of categories

- **Demands:** Identify what is challenging workers at different levels.
- **Resources:** Show what is available to support and protect workers.
- **Risk Factors:** Highlight additional pressures that may require targeted interventions.
- **Outcomes:** Track the results of the interplay between demands, resources and risk factors.

Why this matters

This structure allows users – trade unions, policy-makers and others – to diagnose where the balance is lost, understand the root causes of health and safety issues, and identify where interventions (increasing resources or reducing demands/risk factors) are needed.

Country Resources	
OSH legislative framework existence	EU-OSHA policy mapping
Existence of national OSH strategy	EU-OSHA policy mapping
Use of OSH services	
Risk assessments conducted	ESENER
OSH training in enterprises	ESENER
Companies with OSH representative	ESENER
Companies with a risk assessment in place	ESENER
Companies that document risk assessments	ESENER
Companies with preventive services (internal or external)	ESENER
Companies with plan to prevent psychosocial risks	ESENER
Companies with procedure for absenteeism	ESENER
Decision authority	
Skill discretion	EWCS
Satisfaction with working conditions	
	EWCS

Organisation Resources

Job Resources

Proportion of temporary agency workers	Eurostat
Proportion of workers with fixed-term contracts	Eurostat
Proportion of part-time workers	Eurostat
Share of workers aged 55–64	Eurostat
Share of non-EU migrants	Eurostat
Gender employment gap	Eurostat
Share of workers in high-risk sectors	Eurostat
Labour inspections	SIC reports
Employment contract type (permanent, temporary)	
Working hours (full-time, part-time)	Eurostat, LFS
Migrant status	Eurostat, LFS
Gender and age structure	Eurostat
Perceived health risks at work	LFS-AHM

Contextual Risk Factors

Personal Risk Factors

Job Demands	
Poor communication	ESENER, EWCS
Dealing with difficult clients	ESENER, EWCS
Discrimination and harassment	EWCS
Exposure to noise	EWCS, ESENER
Exposure to vibration	EWCS, ESENER
Exposure to high or low temperatures	EWCS
Exposure to chemical agents	EWCS, ESENER
Exposure to biological agents	EWCS, ESENER
Repetitive hand and arm movements	ESENER
Lifting/carrying heavy loads	ESENER
Tiring or painful positions	EWCS
Physical inactivity (sitting)	ESENER
Night work	Eurostat, LFS
Shift work	Eurostat, LFS
Weekend work (Saturday, Sunday)	Eurostat, LFS
Exposure to infectious agents	EWCS
Workers with high job strain	EWCS
Prolonged working in tiring or painful positions	EWCS
Use of chemical or biological products	EWCS
Prolonged standing or walking	EWCS
Carrying or moving heavy loads	EWCS
Vibrations from hand tools or machinery	EWCS
Noise (loud or very loud)	EWCS
High or low temperatures	EWCS
Decision authority	EWCS
Skill discretion	EWCS
Satisfaction with working conditions	EWCS

Resources

- Country
- Organisation
- Job

Job Demands

+

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Negative Health & Safety Outcomes

- There are **differences in Negative Health and Safety Outcomes between Countries, Industries, and over Time**
- These differences can be explained by differences in **Job Demands**
- **Resources** on level of the **Country, Organization and Job** can **buffer** these differences
- **Contextual and Personal Risk Factors** and **amplify** these differences

Health & Safety Outcomes

Non-fatal work accidents	ESAW via Eurostat
Fatal work accidents	ESAW via Eurostat
Severe accidents (>3 months or permanent disability)	ESAW via Eurostat
Musculoskeletal disorders	EWCS
Respiratory conditions	EWCS, EODS
Mental health conditions	LFS, WHO estimates
Work-attributable deaths	WHO/ILO, ICOH
Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)	WHO/ILO, ICOH
Job satisfaction	EWCS
Self-rated health	EWCS
Expected ability to work until age 60	EWCS
Work-related deaths (total)	WHO/ILO, ICOH
Work-related deaths (fatal accidents only)	ESAW
Non-fatal accident rate	ESAW
Severe non-fatal accident rate	ESAW
Self-reported work-related health problems	LFS-AHM
Musculoskeletal disorders prevalence	EWCS
Self-rated general health	EWCS
Life expectancy at age 65	Eurostat
Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)	WHO/ILO, ICOH
Job satisfaction	EWCS
Expected ability to work until age 60	EWCS
Absenteeism due to work-related health issues	LFS-AHM

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Appendix 1: the OSH Barometer – structure and data sources

Purpose and background

The OSH Barometer is an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG Employment) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). It provides up-to-date, harmonised information on occupational safety and health (OSH) in the EU. The OSH Barometer supports evidence-based policy-making and social dialogue by offering reliable and stable data on OSH status across Europe.

The platform can be accessed at: <https://visualisation.osha.europa.eu/osh-barometer/>

Main data sources

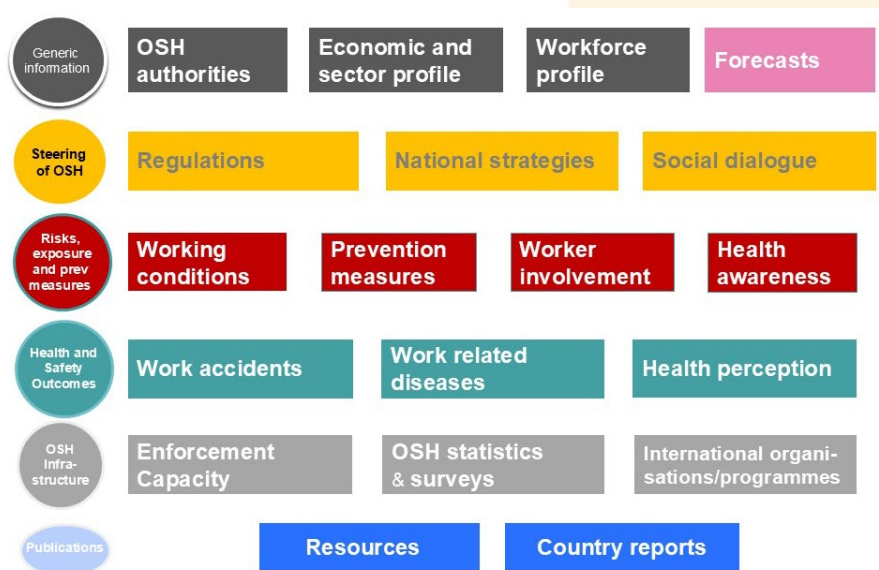
- Eurostat: Economy, sectors, population, employment, ESAW, Labour Force Survey (LFS), EU-SILC
- Eurofound: European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)
- EU-OSHA: ESENER survey, OSH Pulse Flash Eurobarometer, OSHwiki
- Cedefop: Skills forecast
- European Commission DG Employment: Reports and studies
- Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC): Country evaluations and annual reports
- National contact points and EU-OSHA focal points: National OSH system descriptions
- Comprehensive reports from national or European sources

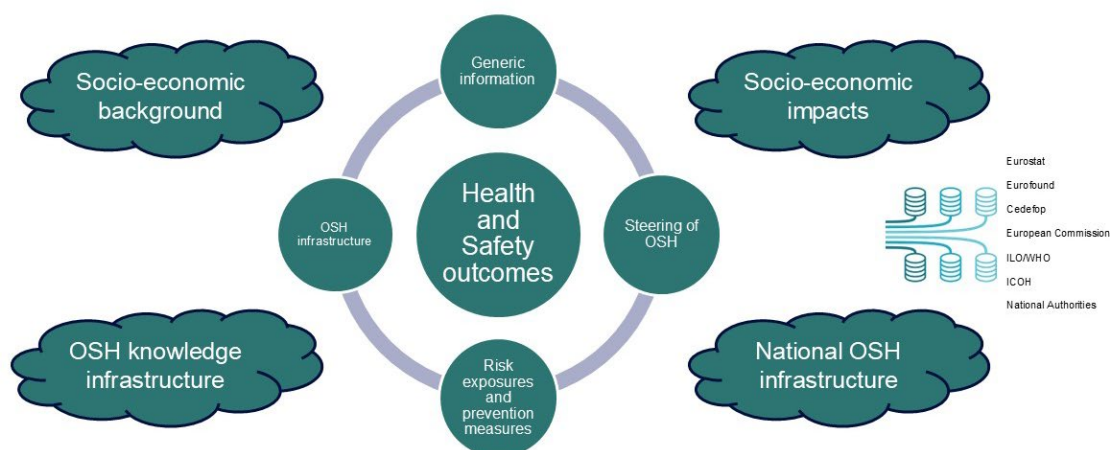
Structure and modules

The OSH Barometer is organised into several modules that allow users to explore OSH data at different levels:

- Steering of OSH
- Working conditions and prevention
- Accidents, diseases and well-being
- OSH infrastructure
- Socio-economic background and impacts
- Health and safety outcomes
- Risk exposures and prevention measures

Visual overview





Organisation of information

Information in the OSH Barometer is organised by country, sector and topic. This structure enables cross-country and cross-sectoral comparisons, helping stakeholders identify trends and patterns in OSH performance.

Methodological notes

The OSH Barometer harmonises definitions across Member States and integrates data from multiple sources, including employers, workers and authorities. This triangulation enhances the reliability of cross-country comparisons and supports a balanced understanding of preventive capacity and exposure.

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