



## IMPLEMENTATION OF OSH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE TEOFILÓW TEXTILE WORKS

### 1. Organisations involved

Saint Gobain Rigips GmbH

### 2. Description of the case

#### 2.1. Introduction

ZTK 'Teofilow' S.A., a textile works employing 450 people, has been implementing the rules of systematic occupational safety management since 1997. External support and expertise in OSH management were important factors contributing to its success in this field. The company has participated in two initiatives: the pilot EVISA project (1997-1998) on 'Improvement of Safety & Health Management System in Polish Enterprises' conducted by the National Labour Inspectorate in cooperation with Norwegian consulting firm Det Norske Veritas and the OSHMAN project (1999-2000) entitled 'Occupational Safety and Health Management in Polish Industry' provided by the Central Institute for Labour Protection with assistance from Swedish experts.

ZTK Teofilow S.A. has been involved in the production and sale of top-quality knitted fabrics for over three decades. The company offers the most comprehensive textile product range in Poland. In August 1998 it received the TUV Certificate which confirms the successful implementation of ISO 9001 requirements for knitted fabric production. Moreover the company's efforts to ensure the quality of its products and safety and satisfaction of its clients is testified by other certificates, including the 'Safe for baby', 'Safe for child', 'Friendly for man', 'Sanitiget' and 'Confidence in Textiles' certificates.

The top management have always paid considerable attention not only to clients' satisfaction but also to safety and health at work of their employees. The company is a member of the Safe Work Leaders Forum.

In 1997 company management decided to break away from the traditional approach to safety at work and to implement an OSH management system that would result in:

- minimisation of losses related to OSH;
- implementation of assessment and control measures for occupational risk related to activities and tasks being planned;
- elimination of occupational hazards in the planning phase of company development plans; and
- enhancement of reliability and image of the company among partners and external institutions.

OSH objectives have been set in the company's 'Safety Strategy' as follows:

- producing products of the best quality while at the same time ensuring OSH for all employees;
- minimising losses resulting from bad working conditions; and
- ensuring the participation of all employees in creating and maintaining safe and healthy working conditions at the required level.

To implement the OSH management system and consequently to achieve the abovementioned objectives, ZTK Teofilow S.A. participated in two initiatives relating to OSH management: the EVISA pilot project (1997-1998) and the OSHMAN project (1999-2000).



## **2.2. What was done, and how?**

The main objective of company participation in both initiatives was to support the implementation of a new OSH management system.

The objective set for the EVISA project was to gain a basic knowledge of OSH management and risk assessment in the workplace and to implement elements of an OSH management system. The second project, OSHMAN, focused on adjusting the already implemented OSH management system to the requirements of Polish standard PN-N-18001 'Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems. Requirements'.

In the EVISA project the labour inspectors and Norwegian experts provided training on OSH management. The knowledge gained during the training and the external assistance given by the labour inspectors and the experts enabled the company to assess working conditions and to improve safety procedures. As a result the company gained the 5th Safety Level according to the International Safety Rating System (ISRS).

Within the OSHMAN project two specific problems were identified: a technical problem – too high a level of occupational risk at workplaces in the Dye Shop – and an organisational problem – lack of an effective information system ensuring that employees were informed about occupational risks at their workstations. To work towards solving both problems the following activities were undertaken:

- training on OSH management systems defined in the Polish standard PN-N-18001 'Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems. Requirements' was provided to all employees;
- development of a plan to adapt OSH management systems to the requirements of Polish standard PN-N-18001;
- establishing procedures for communication in OSH and on protective and corrective actions;
- workshops aimed at improving employees' negotiating skills;
- establishing and approving a schedule of workplace meetings for discussing OSH-related problems;
- designing and printing the company bulletin 'Organisational Safety Management' dedicated to OSH issues as well as environmental ones.

The activities undertaken in the Dye Shop included hazard identification and occupational risk assessment at workstations in cooperation with all employees, as well as follow-up actions. The corrective and preventive actions were aimed mainly at improving organisational procedures on harmful chemical substances, identifying Dye Shop employees' need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and improving the communication and organisational climate in the Shop by ensuring that all staff participated in OSH-related activities. The information on occupational risk assessment was placed on the noticeboard in the Dye Shop and published in the company bulletin.

## **2.3. What was achieved?**

Two years after the implementation of the OSH management system the number of occupational accidents had fallen to one-third of its previous level. Days lost to sick leave fell by over 4,000. All employees gained significant knowledge about OSH management that contributed to the improvement of the safety culture. Employees became more aware of their responsibility for their own safety and that of their colleagues. Thus the employees' commitment to OSH-related activities has also increased. Moreover, the transfer of information between management and employees, and cooperation between them in OSH activities, has improved significantly.

The company is continuously involved in activities aimed at improving the OSH management system. Major emphasis is laid on ensuring valid occupational risk assessment at all

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workplaces, and on-the-job training and consultation in OSH with all employees. These activities are resulting in both technical improvements in working conditions and increasing knowledge and awareness of OSH. Since 2002, the following corrective and preventive actions have been taken:

- verification of occupational risk assessment, if necessary;
- providing occupational risk assessment of all new workplaces;
- modernisation of floor surfaces in manufacturing shops (reduction of risks related to falls, trips, and slips);
- improving lighting at knitter workstations;
- modernisation of a machinery park (reduction of risks related to superficial injuries and wounds);
- elimination of exposure of employees to harmful chemical substances in the Dye Shop;
- modernisation of internal transport (reduction of risks related to manual handling);
- modernisation of ventilation system in manufacturing shops (improvement of microclimate);
- purchase of new display screen equipment (DSE) and chairs complying with ergonomic requirements
- (improvement of ergonomic conditions at workstations equipped with DSE).

Moreover the company liaises constantly with the Central Institute for Labour Protection, using its educational and information materials, participating in events organised by the Institute and other institutions operating in OSH. Consequently since the conclusion of both initiatives the number and severity of occupational accidents have been systematically decreasing.

All the activities undertaken within the second project (OSHMAN) were aimed at adjusting the already implemented OSH management system to the requirements of the Polish standard, which is fully compatible with the ISO 9001 standard. This contributed to better coordination of activities in the company and a higher effectiveness of both OSH and general management. Consequently OSH aspects have become a part of business and are being incorporated into decision-making processes at every level of management.

## ***Problems faced***

During both projects all significant problems were overcome. Nevertheless, a problem appeared after termination of the projects: how to continue the initiative without external support and motivation. However, the enthusiastic involvement of the employees in the activities of both projects, as well as ongoing access to OSH-related expertise provided by the Central Institute for Labour Protection, have allowed this problem to be overcome and guarantee that activities aimed at OSH management improvement are being continued in the company.

## ***2.4. Success factors***

The main idea of both projects was to involve all employees in activities aimed at improving working conditions. This active participation of all employees as well as external expertise and consultations given by labour inspectors, researchers from the Central Institute for Labour Protection as well as international experts have contributed to the success of both projects. The compatibility of quality and OSH management systems and their integration facilitated the improvement of the OSH management system in the company.

## ***2.5. Further information***

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## **2.6. *Transferability***

The OSH management system can be implemented in any organisation irrespective of its type of activity and size. When implementing the system companies can use their experience of implementing existing systems (e.g. quality or environmental systems) to facilitate the process.

## **3. References, resources:**

- [http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/mainstreaming\\_osh\\_business](http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/mainstreaming_osh_business)