Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Joint report from
EU-OSHA and Eurofound

EU-OSHA seminar on psychosocial risks in Europe

Brussels, 16 & 17 October 2014

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

Eurofound

- Working conditions and psychosocial risks in Europe (EWCS, EurWORK and other Eurofound research)

- Policy interventions and initiatives

- Management of psychosocial risks in European establishments (ESENER)

- Organisational interventions

- Conclusions

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

- **Working conditions and psychosocial risks in Europe (EWCS, EurWORK and other Eurofound research)**

- Policy interventions and initiatives

- Management of psychosocial risks in European establishments (ESENER)

- Organisational interventions

- Conclusions

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

25% of workers experience work-related stress

25% of workers report that work affects their health negatively

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Job content (monotonous, repetitive and complex tasks / skills mismatch / restructuring)

Work intensity (high speed, deadlines, job done) and autonomy (changing tasks, methods of work and speed of work)

Working time arrangements and work-life balance (working hours, regularity, fit between work and social commitments)

Social environment (relationships, adverse social behaviour, conflicts)

Job (in)security

25% of workers experience work-related stress

25% of workers report that work affects their health negatively

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Job content (monotonous, repetitive and complex tasks)
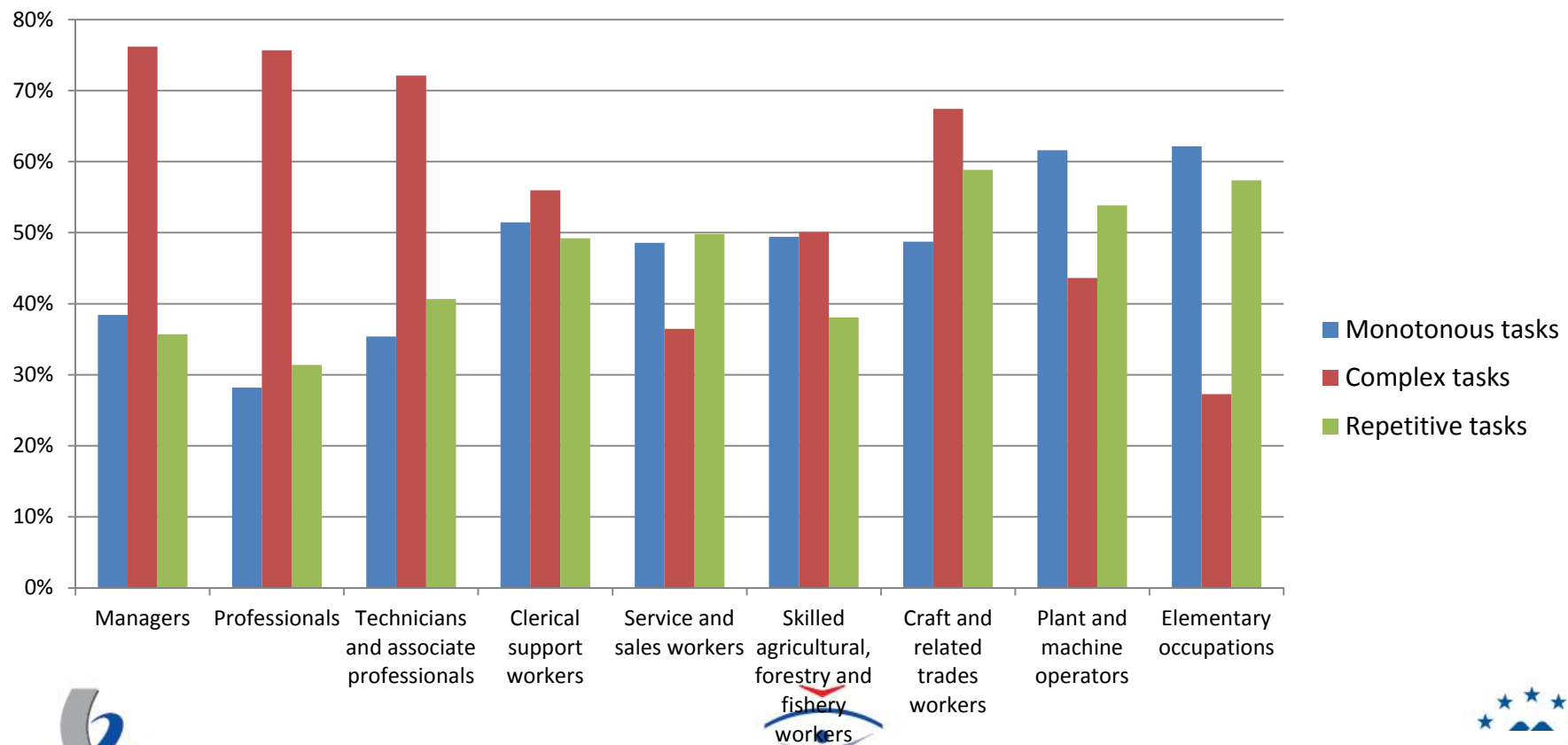
- Example: "monotonous job" is reported by 45% of workers

Work intensity (high speed, deadlines, job done)

- Example: "high speed" is reported by 59% of workers

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work   Eurofound

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Job content-related risks are distributed differently across major occupational groups

Legend:
- Monotonous tasks (blue)
- Complex tasks (red)
- Repetitive tasks (green)

X-axis categories: Managers; Professionals; Technicians and associate professionals; Clerical support workers; Service and sales workers; Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers; Craft and related trades workers; Plant and machine operators; Elementary occupations

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work — Eurofound

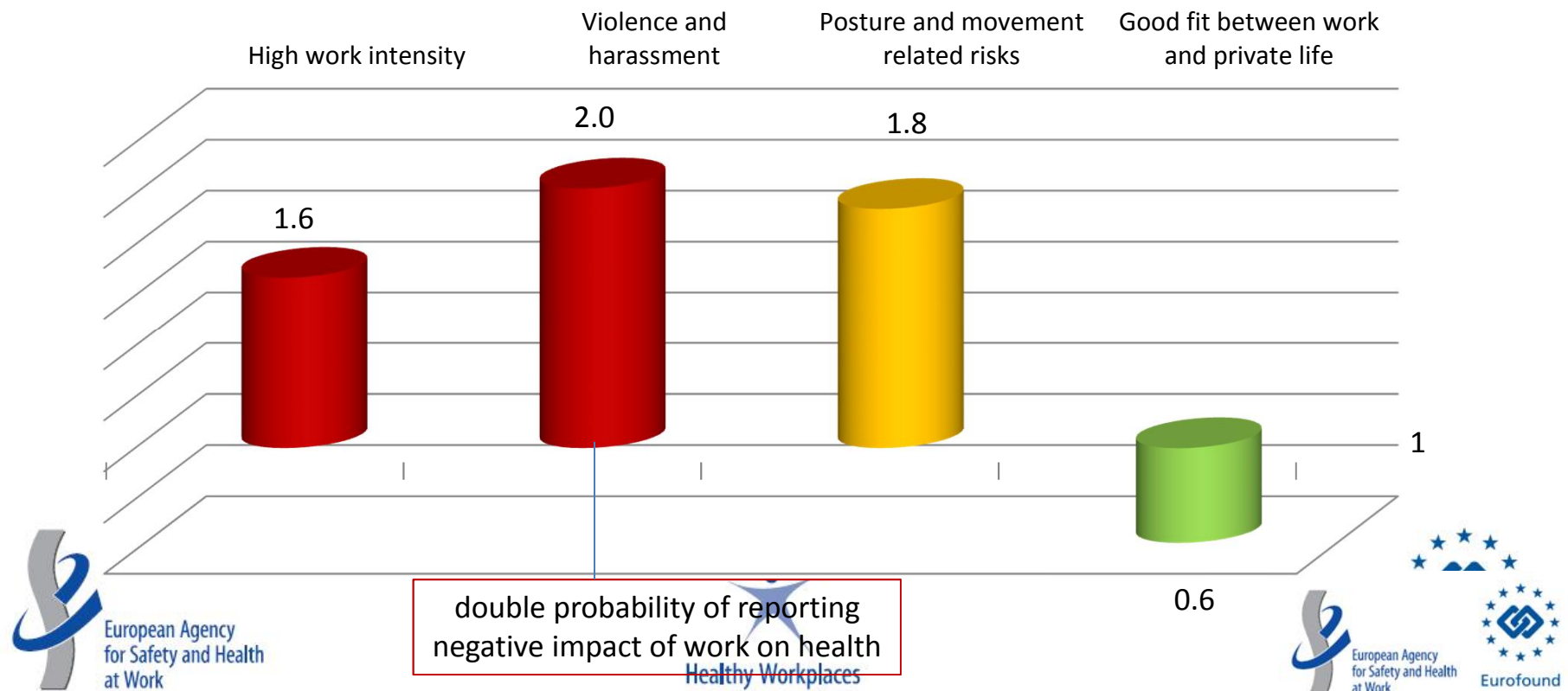# Plant and machine operators and managers are occupations with high work intensity but they differ in their work autonomy
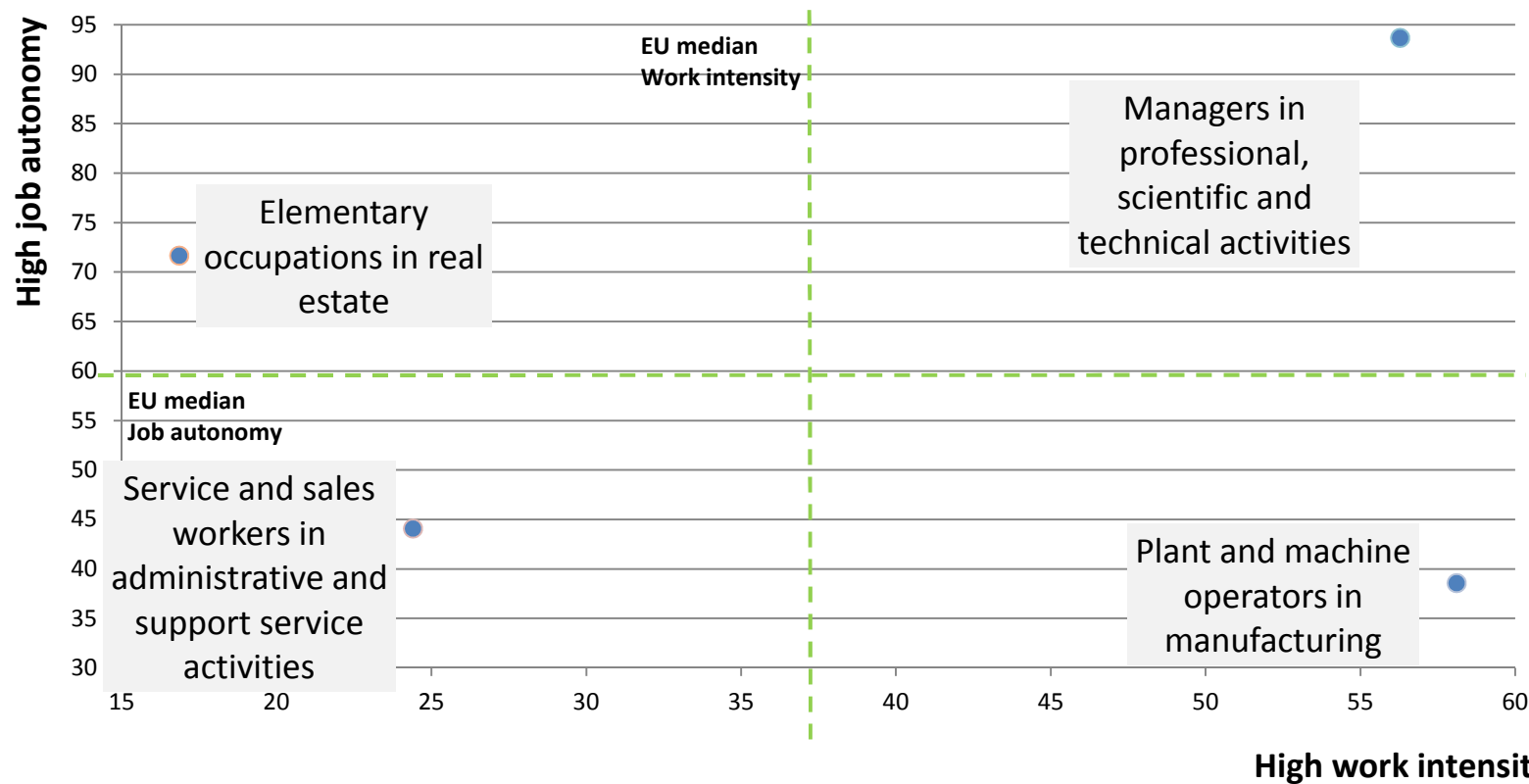
Working conditions related to psychosocial risks are associated with the health and well-being of European workers

Violence and harassment is highly associated with negative general health outcomes, even at a higher level than physical risks

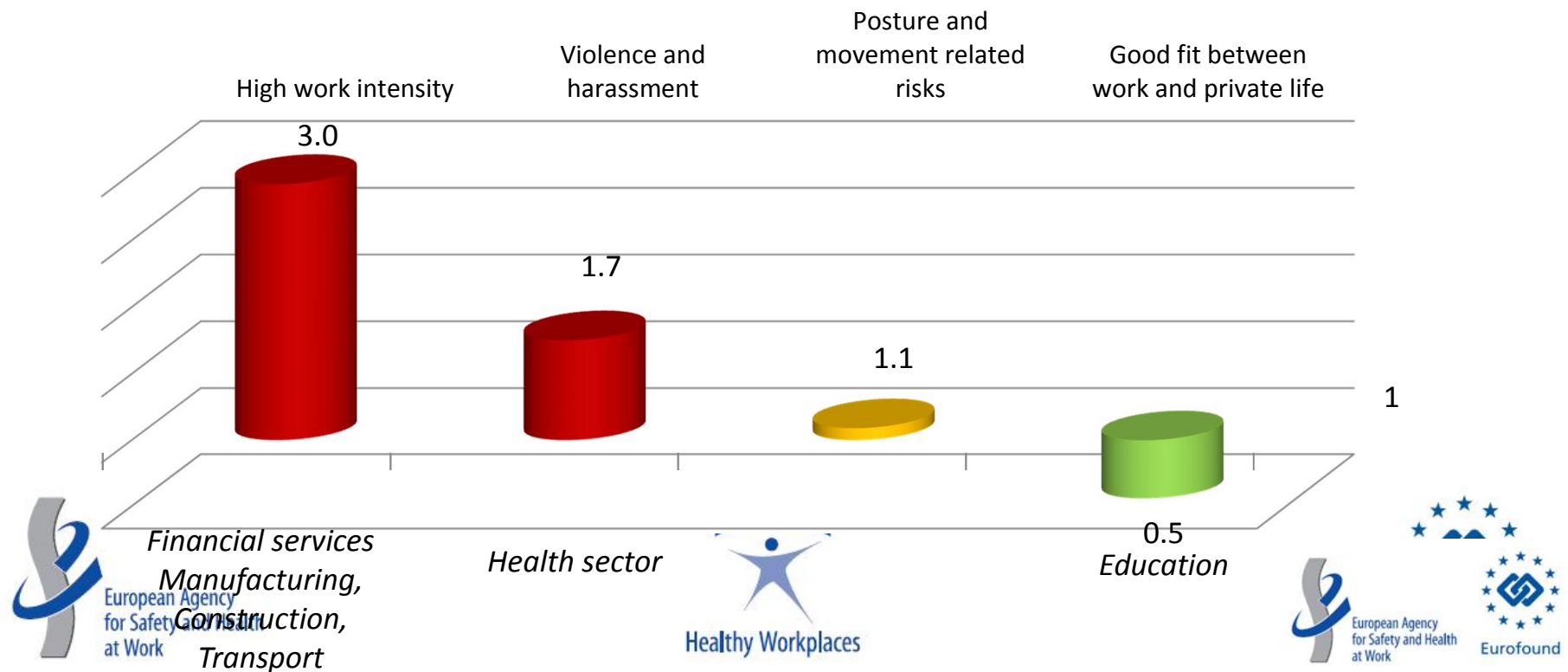*Relative probability of a worker reporting that work affects their health negatively*

High work intensity

Violence and harassment

Posture and movement related risks

Good fit between work and private life

2.0

1.8

1.6

1

0.6

double probability of reporting negative impact of work on health

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

High work intensity increases the probability of workers experiencing "stress" always or most of their working time

Relative probability of reporting work-related stress

High work intensity — 3.0 — Financial services Manufacturing, Construction, Transport

Violence and harassment — 1.7 — Health sector

Posture and movement related risks — 1.1

Good fit between work and private life — 1

0.5 — Education

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Work intensity and Job autonomy (EWCS2010) EU28=100
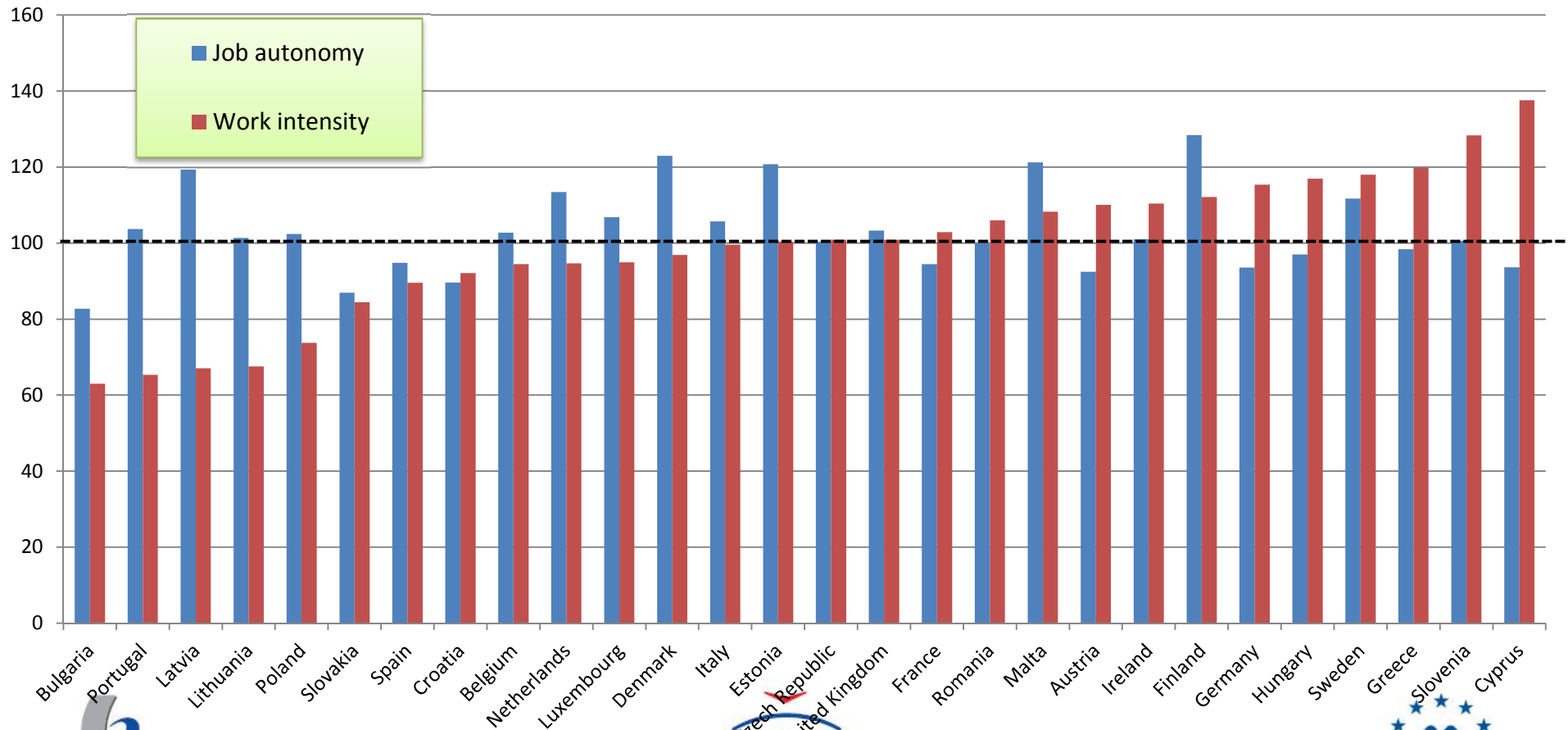
Percentage of workers experiencing "adverse social behaviour" (violence and harassment) by country (EWCS2010)
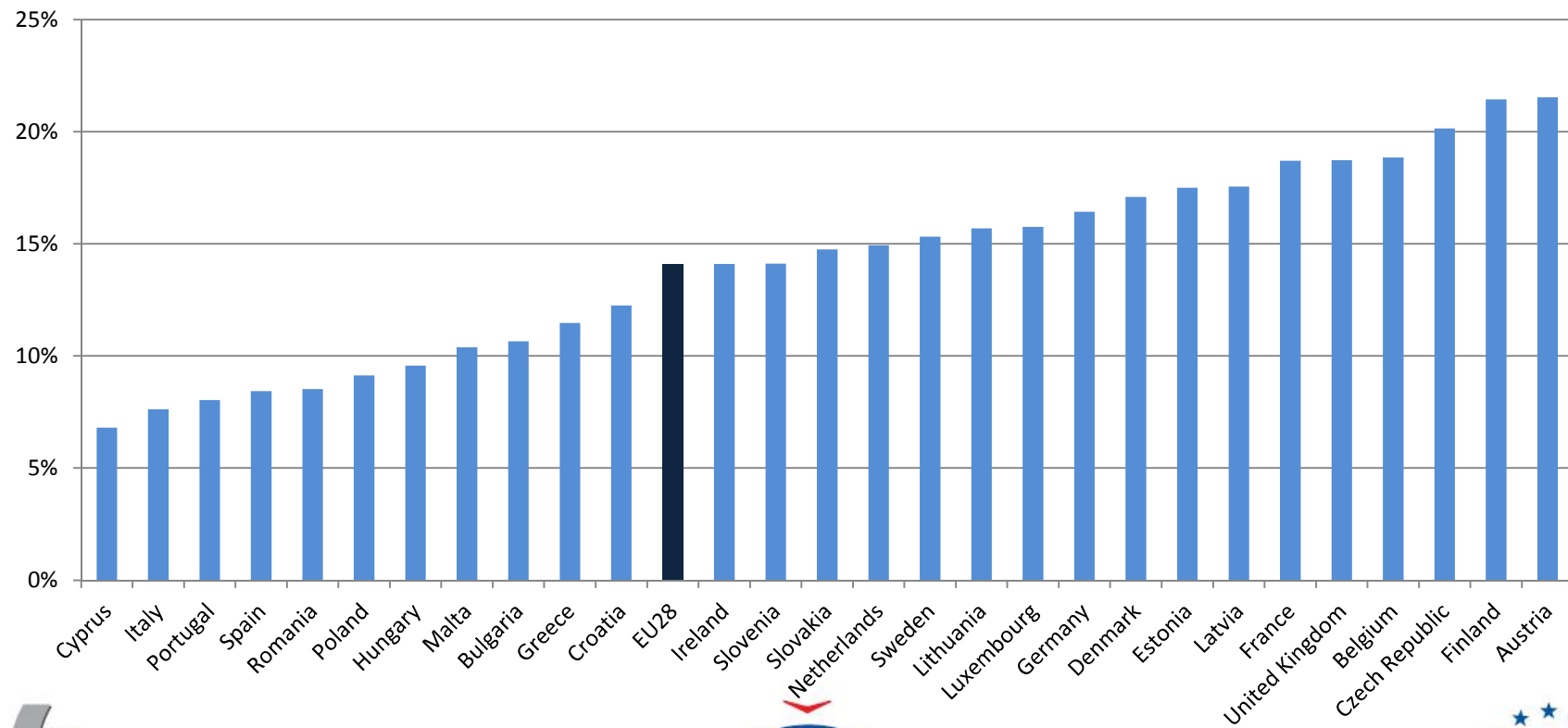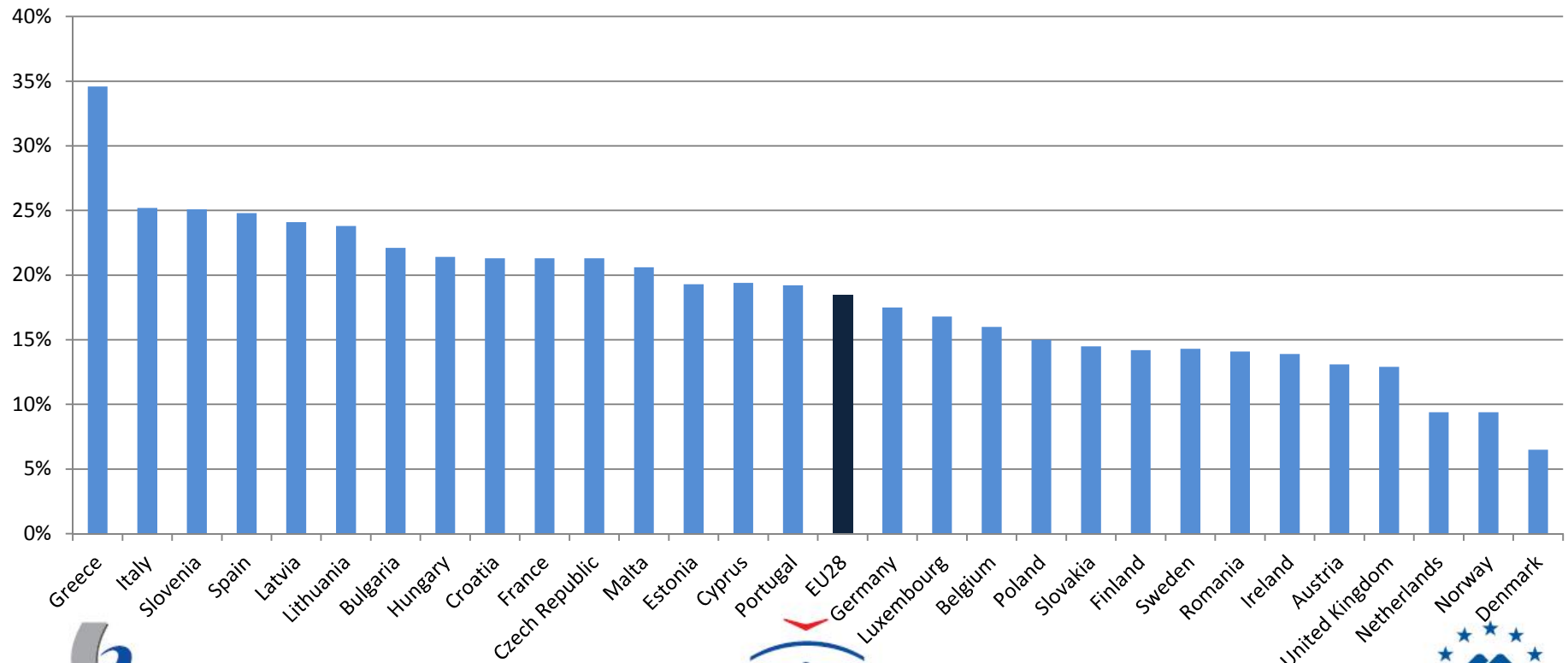
Differences between groups of workers

- Working conditions of workers are determined by the occupation and the economic sector

- Main **gender** differences are related to working time and career prospects

- **Age** differences are mainly related to the level of job insecurity (employability), work intensity and career prospects (better for young workers)

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Some **recent trends**:

- Physical violence is decreasing while harassment remains stable.

- Increase in job insecurity (mainly in Baltic countries and southern Europe)

- Reduction of employees working long hours

- No significant increase in work intensity, except in workplaces affected by the crisis (IE, UK, ES)

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

How can we achieve the health and satisfaction of workers (therefore making work sustainable)?

- Avoiding high levels of work intensity

- Consideration of the relevance of violence and harassment

- Improving work-life balance

- Reducing job insecurity

- Providing tools to cope with difficulties relating to job content

- **Recognition of the complexity of factors playing a role**

- **Gender**

- **EU2020 and sustainability of work**

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

- Working conditions and psychosocial risks in Europe (EWCS, EurWORK and other Eurofound research)

- **Policy interventions and initiatives**

- Management of psychosocial risks in European establishments (ESENER)

- Organisational interventions

- Conclusions

Policy at EU level

- Framework Directive (89/391) on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work

- Social Partners Framework Agreement on Work-related Stress, 2004

- Social Partners Framework Agreement on Violence and Harassment at Work, 2007

- Multisectoral and sectoral agreements

- SLIC inspection campaign, 2012

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work   Eurofound

Social dialogue and role of social partners

- Social dialogue and improvement of working conditions

- Framework agreements

- Joint efforts through collective agreements or based on / influencing national legislation (e.g. Belgium, France, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, UK)

- Others more widespread: guidelines, declarations, conferences or web-based tools

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

France

Social context and agreements

- 2008 national interprofessional agreement on stress
- Speed-up of bargaining process influenced by suicides
- Issues of work organisation and subjective factors
- 2013 agreement on restructuring
- 2013 social partner agreement and branch-level agreements (prevention, awareness and support)

Legislation, labour inspection & other governmental approaches

- Some keep the text very broad, no specific mention of psychosocial risks
- Some generally mention the need to take psychosocial risks into account, but do not specify how exactly
- Obligation to do a psychosocial risk assessment included
- Possibility to include psychosocial expert/psychologist
- Definition of stress and psychosocial risks included in legislation
- Broader framework, approach supported by other actions

Austria:
Legislation & non-binding guidance from the ministry

- 2013 legislation change: psychosocial risks as a possible source of harm included in the legislation.

- Aspects to be covered: design of tasks, working environment & work organisation

- guidance from the ministry on how to approach these aspects.

- Certain part of the risk assessment can be done by psychologist

- Free support from the national accident insurance for work can be requested

European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work

Eurofound

Psychosocial aspects tackled in ESENER

1. **Management of psychosocial risks**

   – Level of concern, measures taken, procedures in place

2. **Key drivers and barriers**

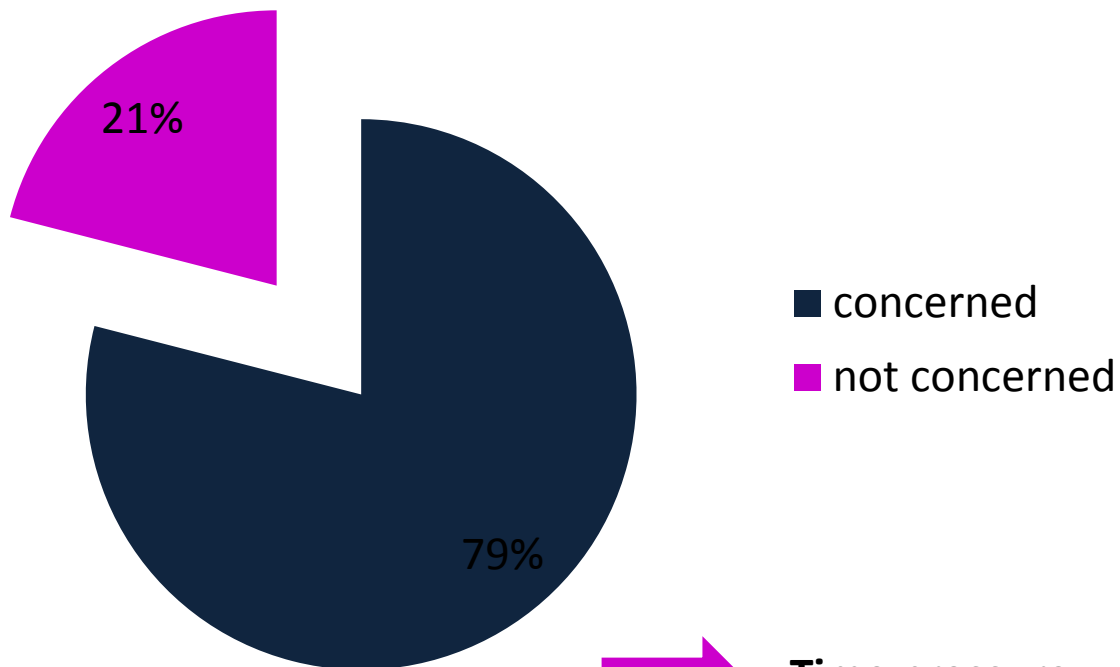   – Why are there appropriate measures and procedures in some workplaces, but not others?

3. **Workers' participation and psychosocial risk management**

   – Formal or direct participation, impact and resources

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work   Eurofound

Managers´ concern about work-related stress

21%

79%

■ concerned

■ not concerned

→ **Time pressure**

→ **Difficult customers**

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Procedures implemented to deal work-related stress

% establishments, selected Member States and overall score EU28
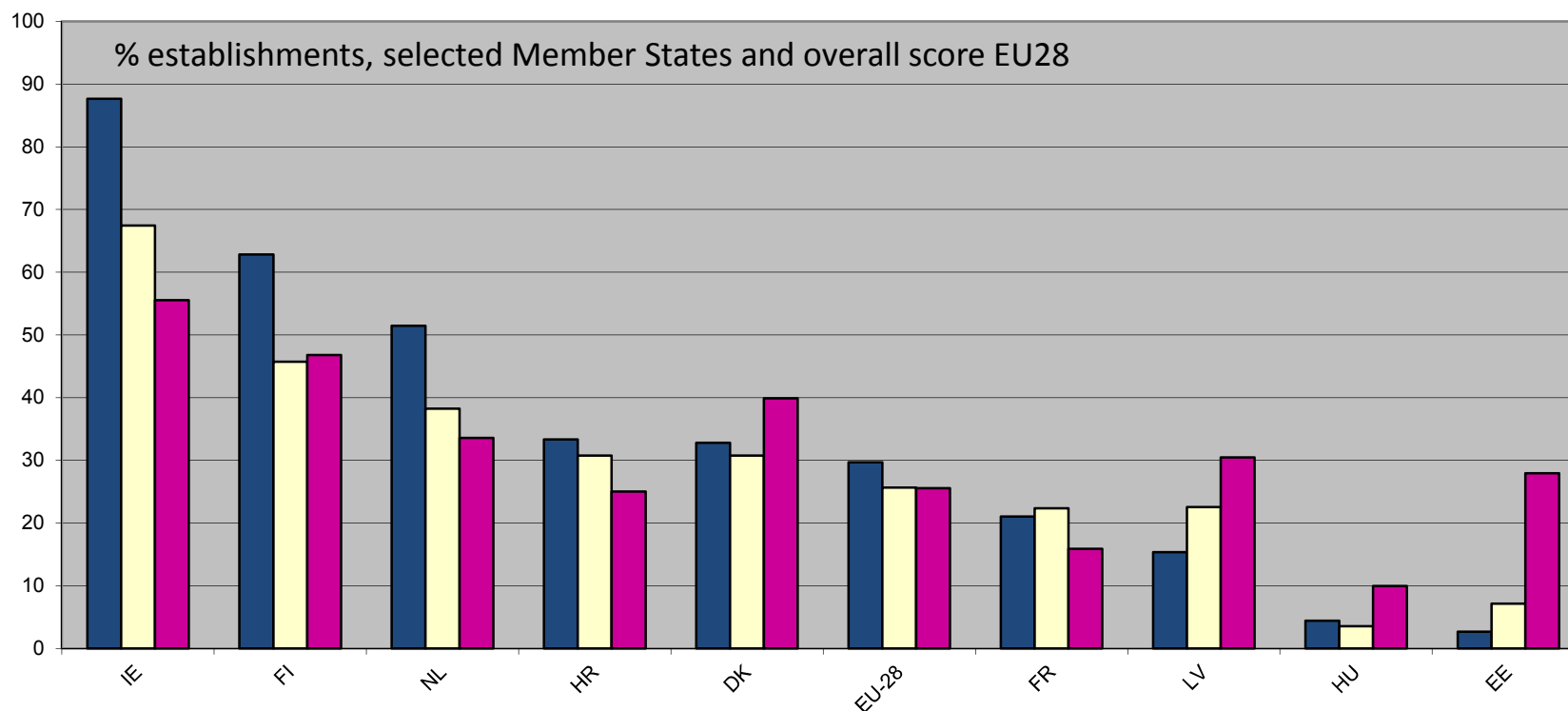
Legend: Bullying or harassment · Work related violence · Work related stress

Categories (x-axis): IE, FI, NL, HR, DK, EU-28, FR, LV, HU, EE

for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Drivers

- **Good general OSH management and reported concern for work-related stress**

- **The main drivers reported by managers:**

  - Requests from employees

  - Desire to reduce absenteeism

  - Legal obligations

Barriers

- **Lack of technical support and guidance and lack of expertise**

- **Lack of resources**

  - higher number of measures in place than those not reporting this barrier

- **Sensitivity of the issue**

  - more measures in place than those not reporting this barrier

Conclusion:
Reported barriers very much depend on the different stages of the companies implementing psychosocial risk management
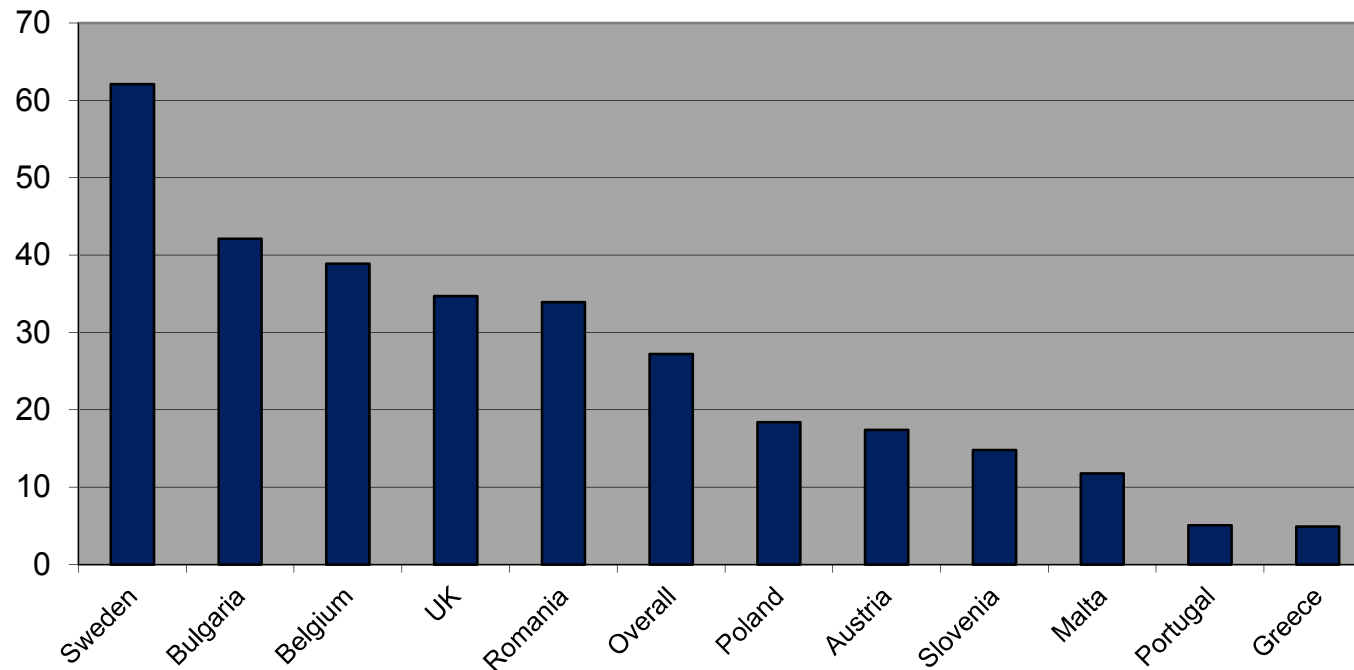
Worker participation

- **Workplaces that have formal worker representation are more likely:**

  - to report management commitment to safety and health
  - to have preventive measures in place for both general OSH and psychosocial risks
  - to involve employees (consultation and participation) in the process of OSH and psychosocial risk management

- **Workplaces that have formal worker representation and a high level of management commitment to OSH are more likely to report that their organisation's OSH and psychosocial risk management are effective**

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

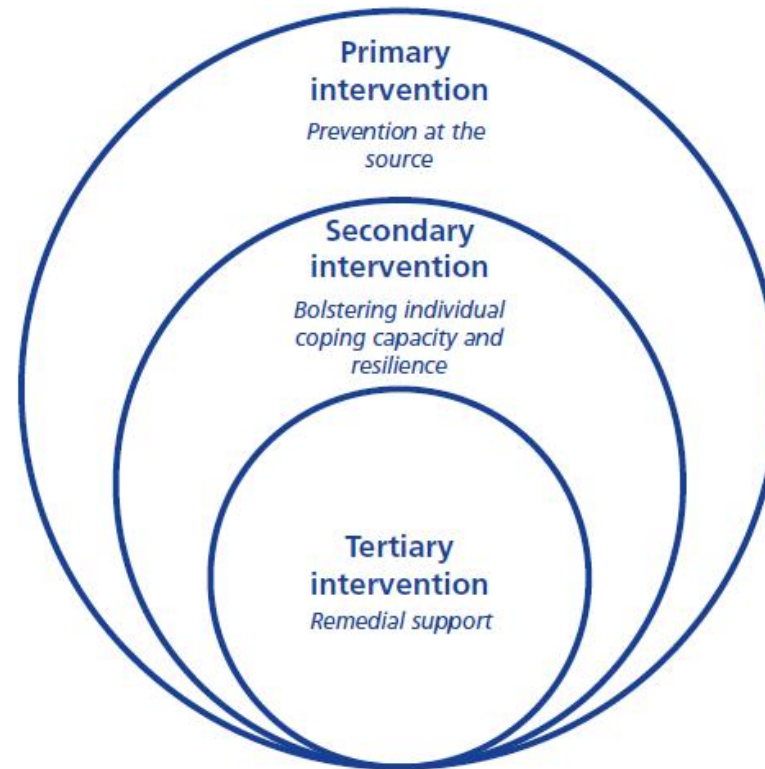Eurofound

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

- Working conditions and psychosocial risks in Europe (EWCS, EurWORK and other Eurofound research)

- Management of psychosocial risks in European establishments (ESENER)

- Policy interventions and initiatives

- **Organisational interventions**

- Conclusions

Psychosocial risks in Europe
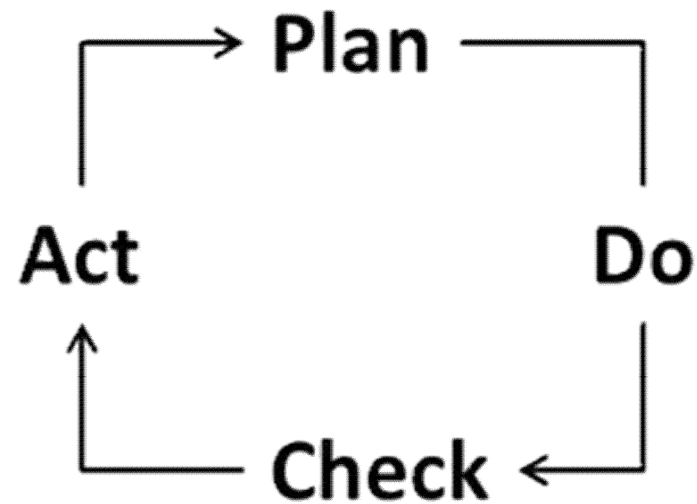## Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Primary intervention
Prevention at the source

Secondary intervention
Bolstering individual coping capacity and resilience

Tertiary intervention
Remedial support

Holistic prevention
&
multilevel interventions

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Eurofound

Workplace interventions:
procedures, measures and processes

Source: Adapted from WHO, 2010a

- Working conditions and psychosocial risks in Europe (EWCS, EurWORK and other Eurofound research)

- Management of psychosocial risks in European establishments (ESENER)

- Policy interventions and initiatives

- Organisational interventions

- Conclusions

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Conclusions:

- **Differences between countries, sectors, size of companies, groups of workers, etc.**

- **Guidance and support needed**

  - Readiness for change

  - Effective interventions

  - Information on resources

- **Worker participation and management commitment crucial**

- **Social Dialogue – also on sectoral level**

- **Legislation and non-binding guidance**

- **Successful approaches as models**

Psychosocial risks in Europe
Prevalence and strategies for prevention

Thank you!