



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
1 Survey methodology.....	3
2 Who knows most about OSH in European workplaces?	4
3 OSH management.....	5
3.1 What are the risk factors identified by workplaces?	6
3.2 No risk factors?	7
3.3 Are workplaces carrying out risk assessments?	8
3.4 Preventive work design measures	9
4 Emerging risks: psychosocial risks and digitalisation	10
4.1 Psychosocial risks	10
4.2 Digitalisation	14
5 Drivers and barriers.....	17
5.1 No need for risk assessments? Why not?	17
5.2 Why are workplaces managing OSH?	17
5.3 What makes managing OSH difficult?	19
6 Worker involvement.....	21

Introduction

EU-OSHA's third survey of European enterprises aims to help workplaces to deal more effectively with safety and health and to promote the health and well-being of employees. It provides cross-nationally comparable information relevant for the design and implementation of new policies in the field of occupational safety and health (OSH).

EU-OSHA's third European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER 2019) asks those 'who know best about safety and health in the workplace' about the way safety and health risks are managed in their workplace, with a particular focus on psychosocial risks, namely work-related stress, violence and harassment. During the first half of 2019 a total of 45,420 workplaces — across all sectors and employing at least five people — were surveyed in the 33 countries covered: the EU27_2020 as well as Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The questionnaire was kept largely the same as that used in in ESENER 2014, to allow comparisons over time.

Developed with the support of governments and social partners at European level, ESENER 2019 aims to assist workplaces across Europe by better understanding their needs for support and expertise as well as identifying the factors that encourage or hinder action. ESENER explores in detail four OSH areas:

1. the general approach in the workplace to managing OSH;
2. how the emerging area of psychosocial risks is addressed;
3. the main drivers and barriers to the management of OSH;
4. how worker participation in OSH management is implemented in practice.

This report presents an overview of the main findings of ESENER 2019 ⁽¹⁾. More detailed results and analyses will be presented in forthcoming publications, to be published in 2021 and beyond, and made available at <http://www.esener.eu>. As for ESENER 2009 and ESENER 2014, the ESENER 2019 dataset will be accessible via the [UK Data Archive \(UKDA\)](#) and [GESIS](#).

(¹) Following the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 31 January 2020, the averages in this report have been calculated for the 27 Member States, without the United Kingdom, both for 2019 and 2014, for the sake of comparability.

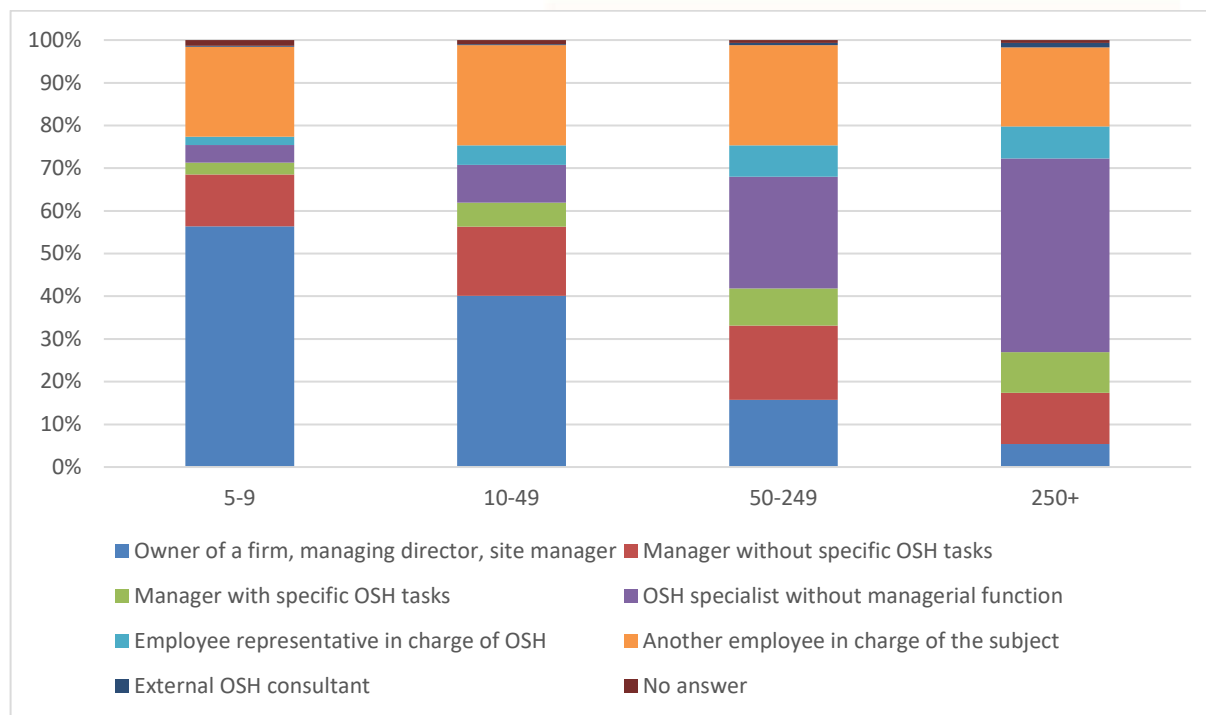
1 Survey methodology

Interviews were conducted in spring and summer 2019 in workplaces with five or more employees, including both private and public organisations across all sectors of economic activity except for private households (NACE T) and extraterritorial organisations (NACE U).

- Thirty-three countries were covered: all 27 EU Member States, Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
- In total, 45,420 workplaces were surveyed, the respondent being 'the person who knows best about safety and health in the workplace'. By country, the samples ranged from about 450 in Malta to 2,250 in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom (see national sample sizes at <https://visualisation.osha.europa.eu/esener#!/en/about>).
- The national reference samples were boosted through funding from the national authorities in three countries: Ireland (+1,250), Norway (+450) and Slovenia (+300).
- Data were collected mainly through computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). There was an option to complete the survey online for those who refused to be interviewed over the phone.
- Fieldwork was carried out by Kantar Public and its network of fieldwork centres in each country.
- Samples were drawn following a disproportionate sample design that was later redressed by weighting.
- Efforts were made to build samples that provide the necessary quality and ensure cross-national comparability.
- The questionnaire was developed by a team comprising experts in survey design and in OSH (particularly psychosocial risks) together with EU-OSHA staff.
- More information on the methodology of ESENER can be found at <https://visualisation.osha.europa.eu/esener#!/en/about>.

2 Who knows most about OSH in European workplaces?

Figure 1. The 'person who knows best about safety and health at the workplace' (ESENER 2019 respondent), by size class (percentage of workplaces)



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2019.

- The target respondent for ESENER 2019 is the 'person who knows best about safety and health in the workplace'.
- Workplace size has a clear influence on the type of respondent (Figure 1).
- The 'owner/managing director/site manager' is the usual respondent in very small workplaces (five to nine employees) (56 % of all respondents in this size class in the EU27_2020).
- This percentage decreases gradually as workplace size grows in favour of a respondent with a more technical role, as represented by the category 'OSH specialist without managerial function' (45 % of respondents among workplaces employing 250+ employees).
- 'Employee representative in charge of OSH' is a small group, making up 7 % of respondents in the largest size classes, whereas around 20 % of respondents in all four size classes are 'another employee in charge of OSH'. This is significant not only in terms of the high proportion but also because it says something about the preventive culture in these workplaces, where there is no appointed OSH expert available to respond to the survey (and, probably, to deal with OSH on a day-to-day basis).

3 OSH management

Table 1. The changing world of work: a selection of indicators (percentages of workplaces), 2019 and (when available) 2014

Indicator	ESENER 2019 question	EU27_2020 average 2019 (2014)	Countries 2019 (2014)
Workers not on the payroll	Does you have workers who are not on the payroll, such as subcontractors, temporary agency workers or volunteers?	32 %	Belgium: 60 % Netherlands: 54 % Sweden: 52 % Bulgaria: 14 % Romania: 16 % Lithuania: 17 %
Ageing society	Do employees aged over 55 years account for more than a quarter of the workforce?	25 % (21 %)	Estonia: 38 % (30 %) Lithuania: 36 % (22 %) Latvia: 35 % (32 %) Luxembourg: 11 % (9 %) Malta: 15 % (8 %) Greece: 15 % (9 %)
Workplaces	Do employees work from home on a regular basis?	13 % (12 %)	Netherlands: 33 % (26 %) Belgium: 28 % (20 %) Denmark: 25 % (24 %) Italy: 2 % (4 %) Portugal: 5 % (7 %) Bulgaria: 5 % (6 %)
Workplaces	Does work take place somewhere else outside the premises (other than working from home)?	43 %	Slovenia: 56 % Denmark: 54 % Luxembourg: 54 % Romania: 23 % Bulgaria: 26 % Greece: 30 %
Language	Do you have employees who have difficulties understanding the language spoken on the premises?	8 % (6 %)	Cyprus: 20 % (12 %) Sweden: 19 % (15 %) Luxembourg: 17 % (16 %) Bulgaria: 2 % (2 %) Hungary: 3 % (3 %) Slovakia: 3 % (2 %)

NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019.

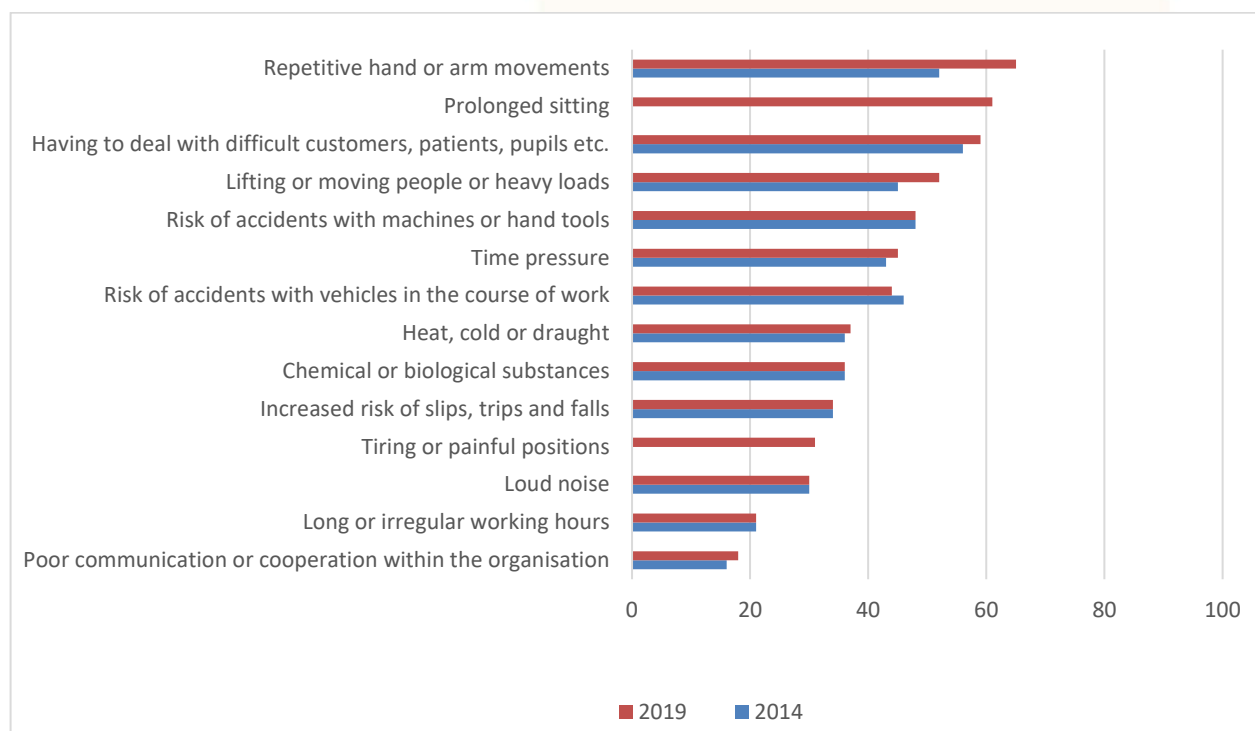
ESENER 2019 sheds light on some of the changes in social and economic conditions that have an effect on European workplaces **employing at least five people**. This constant evolution brings about new challenges that require action to guarantee high levels of safety and health at work (Table 1).

- Around a third of workplaces in the EU27_2020 (32 %) report having **workers who are not on their payroll**, such as subcontractors, temporary agency workers or volunteers. The figure exceeds 50 % of all workplaces in Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden, whereas it is lowest in Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania.
- By sector, having workers not on the payroll is more frequently reported in workplaces in arts, entertainment and recreation (51 %), human health and social work (48 %) and public administration (44 %).
- In the context of an **ageing** society, a quarter of workplaces surveyed in ESENER report that workers aged over 55 years represent more than a quarter of their workforce, the figures being highest in the Baltic states (more than 35 % of workplaces), in contrast with Luxembourg, Malta and Greece. The figures are highest in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (48 %) and real estate (43 %), and lowest in accommodation and food service activities (16 %) and information and communication (19 %).
- It is interesting to see the evolution of what represents a workplace. For instance, 13 % of respondents in the EU report having workers working from home regularly, and the figure goes up to 43 % when places other than the home are included.

- Working from home is most frequently reported in information and communication (41 % of workplaces in the sector in the EU27_2020) and very rarely reported in accommodation and food service activities (4 %) and construction (7 %). On the contrary, working outside the premises somewhere other than home is frequently reported in construction (78 %), as expected, administrative and support service activities (61 %), and transportation and storage (60 %).
- There has been an increase in the proportion of workplaces where there are workers who have difficulties understanding the language spoken in the workplace. This is more frequently reported by workplaces in Cyprus, Sweden and Luxembourg and, by sector, in accommodation and food service activities (16 %) and agriculture (14 %).

3.1 What are the risk factors identified by workplaces?

Figure 2. Percentage of workplaces reporting risk factors, 2019 and 2014



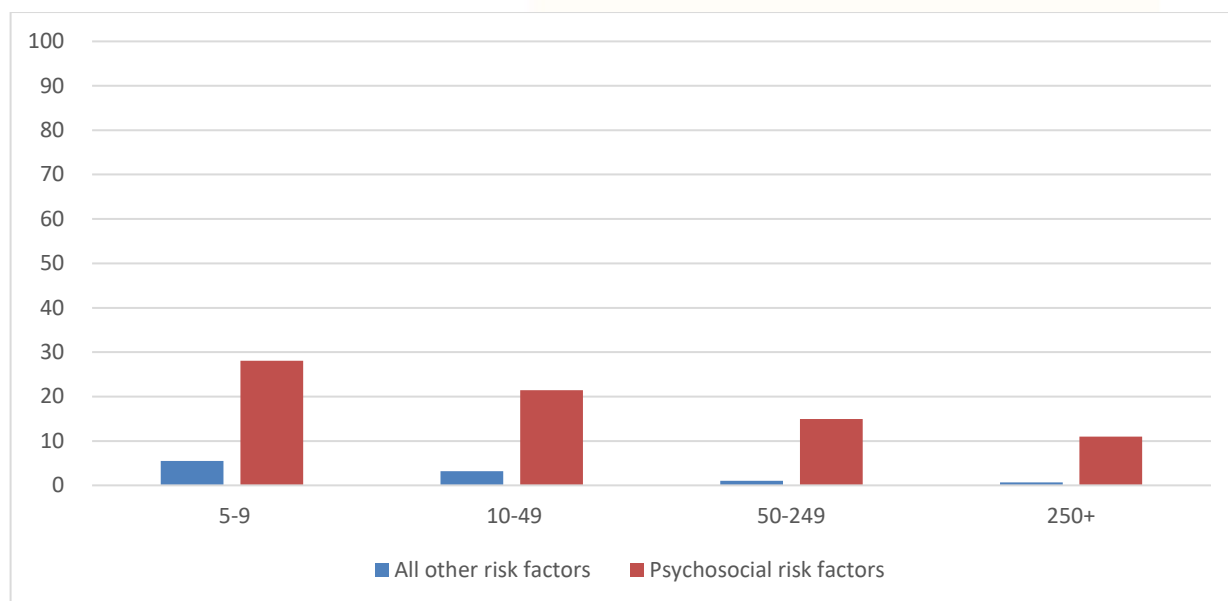
NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019. 'Prolonged sitting' is a new item in the ESENER 2019 questionnaire.

- The most frequently identified risk factors in the EU27_2020 are 'repetitive hand or arm movements' (65 % of workplaces, significantly up from 52 % in 2014) and 'having to deal with difficult customers, patients, pupils, etc.' (59 %, up from 56 %) (Figure 2).
- Interestingly, the second most frequently reported risk factor in the EU27_2020 (61 % of workplaces) is 'prolonged sitting', a new item in the ESENER 2019 questionnaire (previously covered by 'tiring or painful positions, including sitting for long periods'), and that sheds new light on the awareness of sitting as a health risk factor. By sector, it is most frequently reported by workplaces in finance and insurance (93 % of workplaces in the sector in the EU27_2020), information and communication (92 %) and public administration (91 %).
- There is a positive relationship between size and risk reporting, as larger workplaces report the presence of all risk factors more frequently than smaller ones. By sector, 'having to deal with difficult customers, patients, pupils, etc.' is more frequently reported in service sectors, whereas factors leading to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are more evenly reported across all sectors, except for 'lifting or moving people or heavy loads', which is not a major concern in workplaces in finance and insurance (12 %) and information and communication (21 %).

- The main risk factors highlighted above are the most frequently reported ones across most countries, with the exception of time pressure (reported by 45 % of workplaces in the EU27_2020), which is the top risk factor in Finland, Sweden (74 %) and Denmark (73 %), and comes second in the Netherlands (64 %).

3.2 No risk factors?

Figure 3. Percentages of workplaces reporting no risk factors present, by size (number of employees), 2019

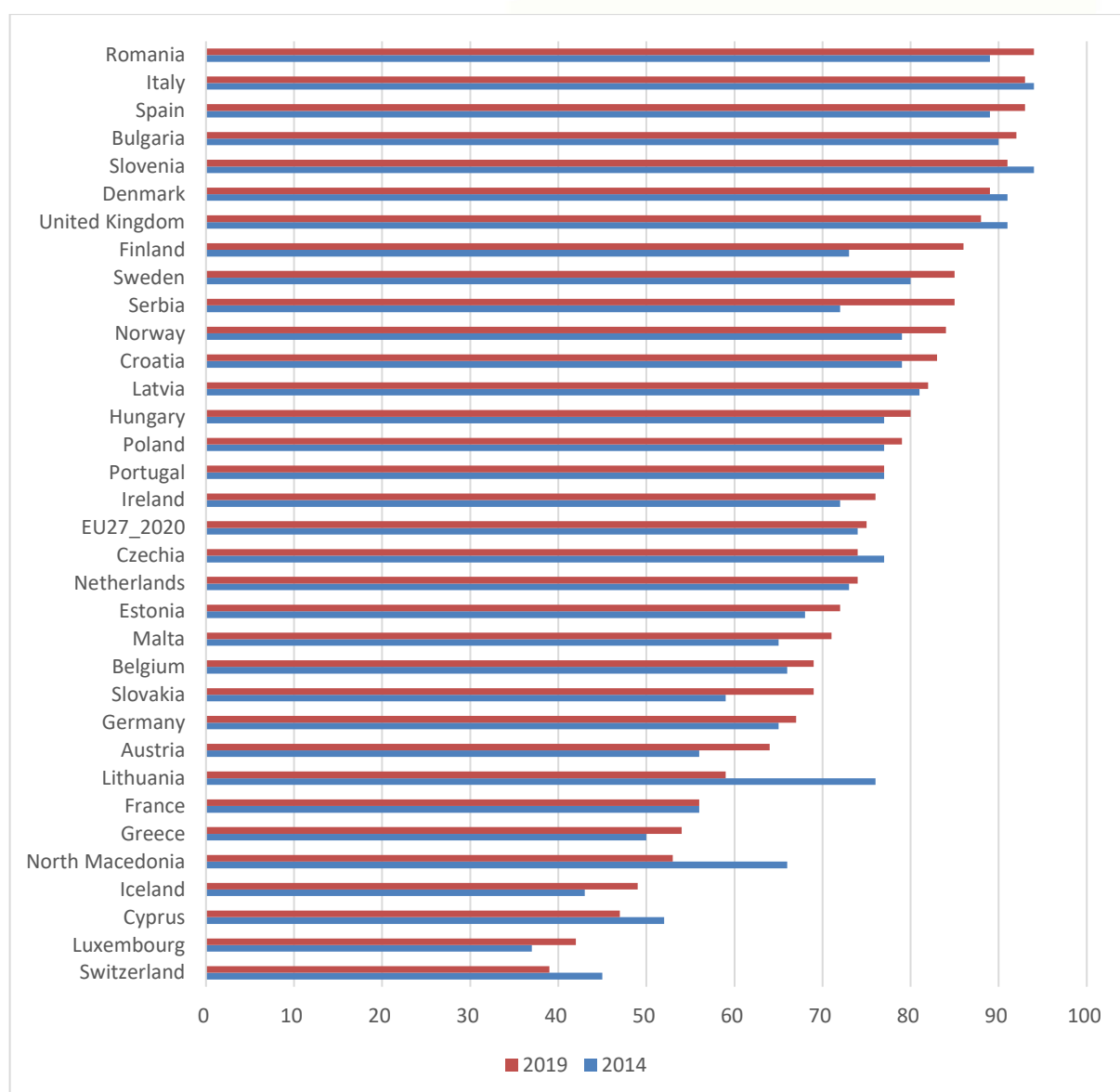


NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2019.

- Interestingly, and looking more deeply into the awareness of risk factors, 4 % of respondents in the EU27_2020 report that their workplace has none of the general OSH risk factors considered above. However, when it comes to psychosocial risk factors, the figure goes up to almost a quarter of surveyed workplaces (24 %), which is revealing (Figure 3).
- The highest proportions of workplaces reporting no psychosocial risk factors are found in Italy (50 %) and Slovakia (44 %), while the lowest are in Denmark (9 %) and Sweden (10 %). By size, there is an inversely proportional relation, with the largest proportions of workplaces reporting no psychosocial risk factors corresponding to the smallest size classes. By sector, these figures are highest in manufacturing and agriculture.

3.3 Are workplaces carrying out risk assessments?

Figure 4. Percentages of workplaces that carry out regular risk assessments, by country, 2014 and 2019



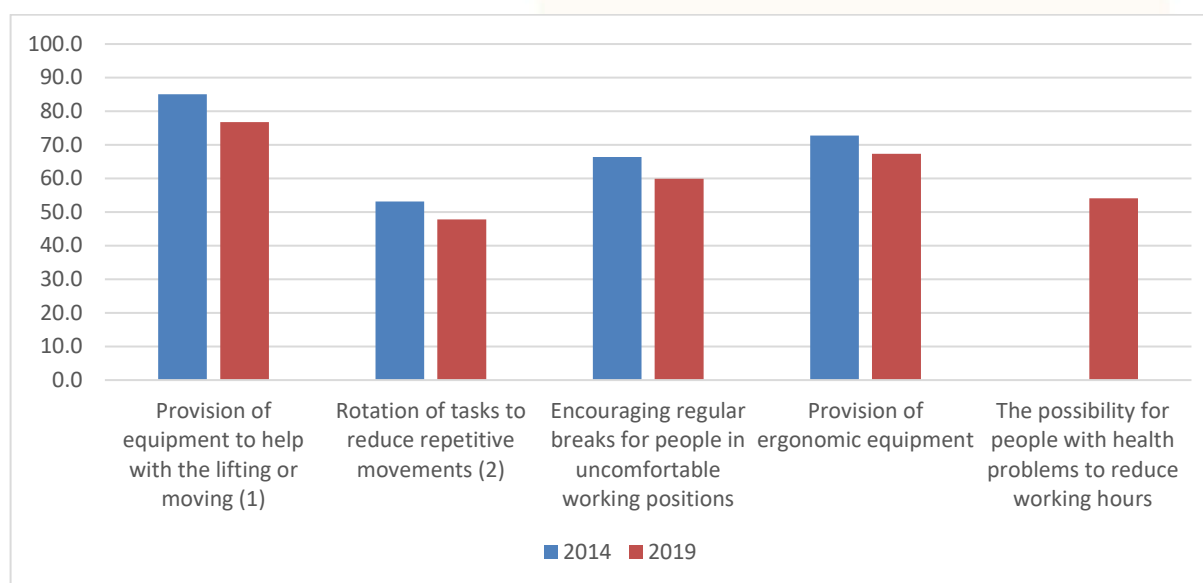
NB: The data are for all workplaces in all 33 countries, from ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019.

- Bearing in mind the information presented on the risk factors, it is important to establish the extent to which workplaces are carrying out **risk assessments**, the cornerstone of the European approach to OSH, as specified in the [EU Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work \(Directive 89/391/EEC\)](#).
- In findings consistent with those from 2014, three-quarters (75 %) of workplaces surveyed in the EU27_2020 for ESENER 2019 indicated that they carry out risk assessments regularly. As might be expected, there is a positive correlation with workplace size. By country, the values range from 94 % of workplaces in Romania and Italy, and 93 % in Spain, to 42 % in Luxembourg (Figure 4).
- Focusing on the country breakdown, and comparing the results with those from 2014, there has been an increase in workplaces reporting carrying out regular risk assessments in several EU27_2020 countries — the most remarkable occurring in Finland, Slovakia and Austria — and in Serbia outside the EU27_2020. On the other hand, some countries, such as Lithuania and Cyprus, saw a reduction in the proportion of workplaces reporting carrying out risk assessments regularly.

- As in the past, there are significant differences when it comes to the proportions of workplaces where risk assessments are conducted mainly by internal staff. The country ranking changes significantly, being topped by Sweden (85 % of workplaces, up from 66 % in 2014) and Denmark (80 %, up from 76 %). On the other hand, the lowest proportions are found in Slovenia (10 %), Spain (10 %) and Hungary (14 %).
- This does not tell us anything about the quality of these risk assessments; in some countries there may be a legal obligation to contract OSH services for such tasks. In principle, and assuming that those in charge of the work are in the best position to control the risks, all enterprises should be able to carry out a basic risk assessment using only their own staff.

3.4 Preventive work design measures

Figure 5. Percentages of workplaces reporting preventive work design measures, 2014 and 2019



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019.

(a) Among those workplaces reporting the presence of lifting or moving people or heavy loads.

(b) Among those workplaces reporting the presence of repetitive hand or arm movements.

- There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of workplaces reporting the adoption of measures to prevent safety and health issues (mainly ergonomic) among their workers. The provision of equipment to help with lifting or moving is still the most frequently reported preventive measure, but the proportion of workplaces reporting its adoption has decreased from 85 % in 2014 to 77 % in 2019. Similarly, the provision of ergonomic equipment (67 %), encouraging regular breaks for people in uncomfortable positions (60 %) and rotation of tasks to reduce repetitive movements (48 %) have all seen reductions (Figure 5).
- A new preventive measure was included in ESENER 2019, namely the possibility for people with health problems to reduce their working hours, which is reported by 54 % of surveyed workplaces in the EU27_2020. While the other four items have a focus on MSDs, this new item is a broader preventive measure and, combined with the others, gives a clearer indication of the extent of the adoption of preventive measures aimed at fostering sustainable working lives.
- The picture by sector is very diverse. Workplaces in human health and social work activities and other service activities rank highly when it comes to the possibility for people with health problems to reduce their working hours. Construction is one of the top sectors for the provision of equipment to help with lifting or moving and rotation of tasks to reduce repetitive movements.

4 Emerging risks: psychosocial risks and digitalisation

4.1 Psychosocial risks

Measures and procedures to tackle psychosocial risks

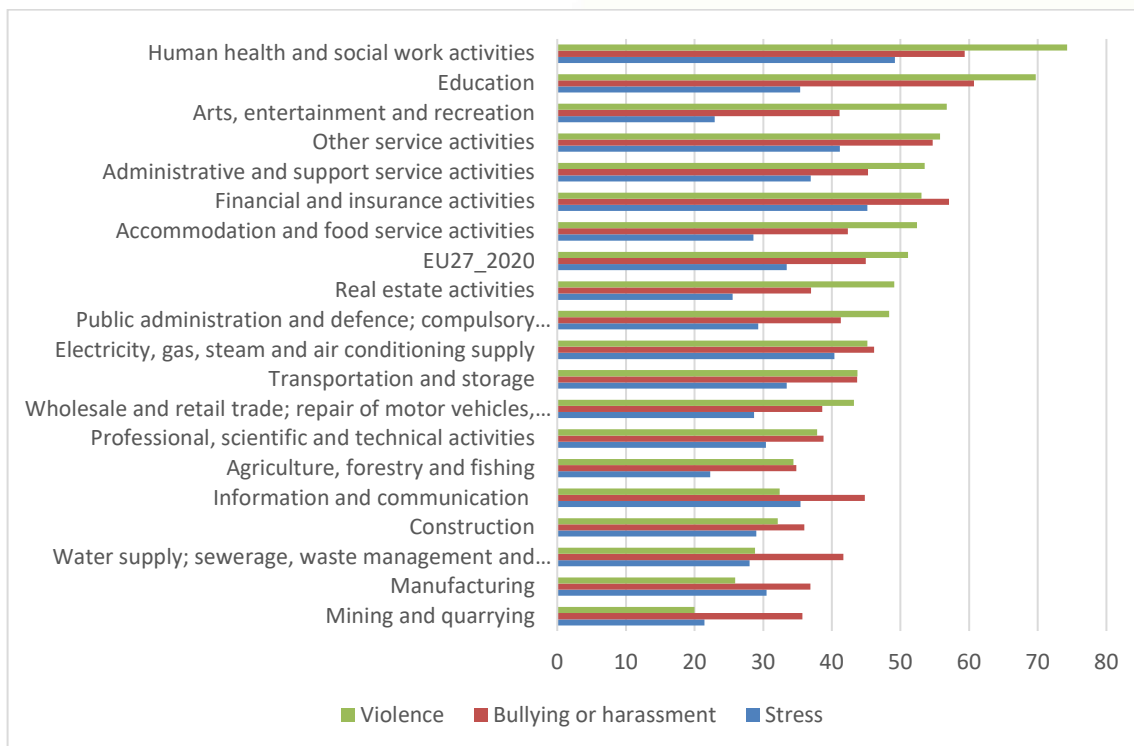
Figure 6. Percentages of workplaces reporting measures to prevent psychosocial risks, by size (number of employees), 2019



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2019.

- Allowing employees discretion in how they do their job is clearly the most frequently reported measure that workplaces use to try and prevent psychosocial risks, and this is particularly the case among micro (69 %) and small enterprises (68 %). Interestingly, of all the measures, this is the only one for which the proportion of workplaces reporting its use decreases as workplace size grows (Figure 6).
- By country, Finland (91 %), Malta (85 %) and Sweden (82 %) have the highest proportions of workplaces reporting such measures, while Italy (49 %), Czechia (54 %) and Slovakia (56 %) have the lowest.
- Among the largest workplaces, the most frequently reported measures are confidential counselling for employees (68 %) and training in conflict resolution (67 %).
- Across all size classes, the least frequently reported measure to prevent psychosocial risks is intervening if excessively long or irregular hours are worked (29 % of workplaces). The lowest proportions of workplaces reporting the use of this measure are in Slovakia (10 %), Poland (12 %) and Slovenia and Bulgaria (14 %).

Figure 7. Percentages of workplaces reporting having procedures in place to prevent psychosocial risks, by sector, 2019

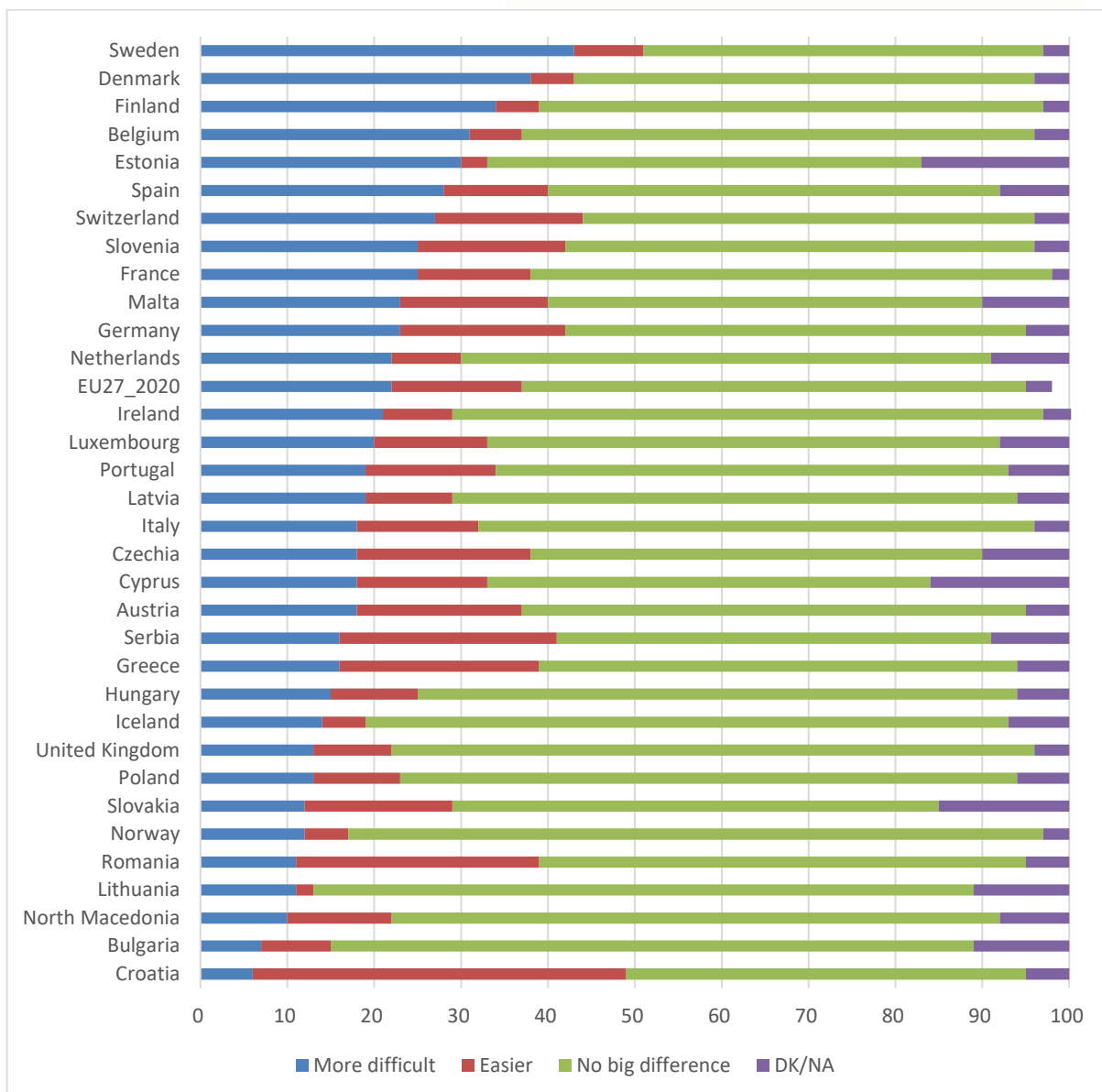


NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020 employing 20 or more people, from ESENER 2019. Only those workplaces reporting the presence of 'having to deal with difficult customers, patients, pupils, etc.' as a risk factor were asked if they had in place procedures to prevent violence.

- ESENER 2019 asked workplaces employing 20 or more people if they had any action plans or procedures in place to deal with psychosocial risks. The most frequently reported procedures targeted violence; such procedures were in place in 51 % of surveyed workplaces in the EU27_2020 that reported 'having to deal with difficult customers, patients, pupils, etc.' as a risk (Figure 7).
- A procedure to tackle bullying or harassment is reported by 45 % of workplaces, whereas only one in three workplaces (33 %) reports having in place an action plan against stress.
- Looking at different sectors, workplaces in the human health and social work sector and in education stand out as the most proactive when it comes to having procedures in place to tackle psychosocial risks.
- By country, such procedures are most frequently reported by workplaces in Ireland and the Nordic countries.

Are psychosocial risks more difficult to address than other OSH risks?

Figure 8. Percentages of workplaces reporting psychosocial risks as more difficult to manage than other OSH risks, by country, 2019



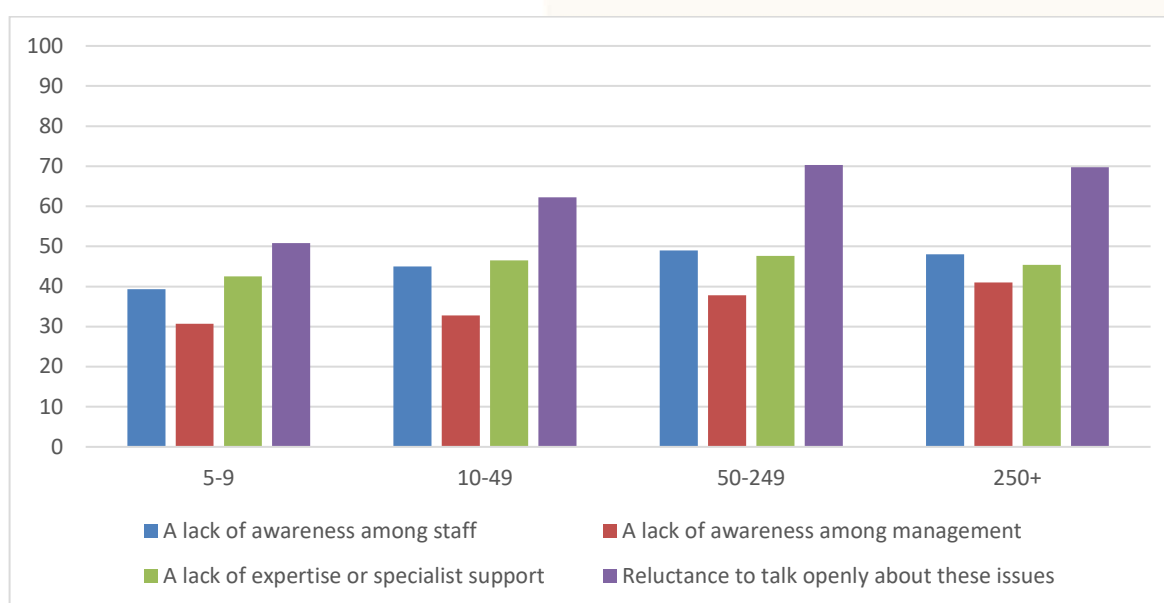
NB: The data are for all workplaces in all 33 countries that report the presence of at least one psychosocial risk factor, from ESENER 2019.

- Looking more deeply into the topic, ESENER 2019 asked those workplaces reporting the presence of psychosocial risks if they regarded them as more difficult to manage than other OSH risks.
- By country, workplaces in the Nordic countries appear to report such risks as particularly difficult to manage more frequently: Sweden (43 %), Denmark (38 %) and Finland (34 %) had the highest figures, in contrast with Croatia (6 %), Bulgaria (7 %) and Lithuania (11 %) (Figure 8).
- Interestingly, it is precisely those countries in which respondents tend to report a higher presence of psychosocial risks and of measures and procedures to deal with them that regard psychosocial risks as more difficult to manage than other OSH risks.
- With regard to workplace size, as size grows, so does the proportion of respondents who perceive psychosocial risks as more difficult to manage than other OSH risks.

- The results by sector show that workplaces in the human health and social work sector and in education, precisely those that are most likely to report having in place procedures to prevent psychosocial risks, also tend to regard them as more difficult to manage. In contrast, workplaces in mining and quarrying (8 %) and in accommodation and food service (15 %) do not see psychosocial risks as particularly difficult to manage and infrequently report having measures in place to prevent them.
- No firm conclusions on causal effects can be drawn from a cross-sectional survey such as ESENER, but these findings suggest that managing psychosocial risks is perceived as more difficult by those who are actually managing them.

What makes psychosocial risks more difficult to address than other OSH risks?

Figure 9. Percentages of workplaces reporting factors that make psychosocial risks more difficult to manage, by size (number of employees), 2019

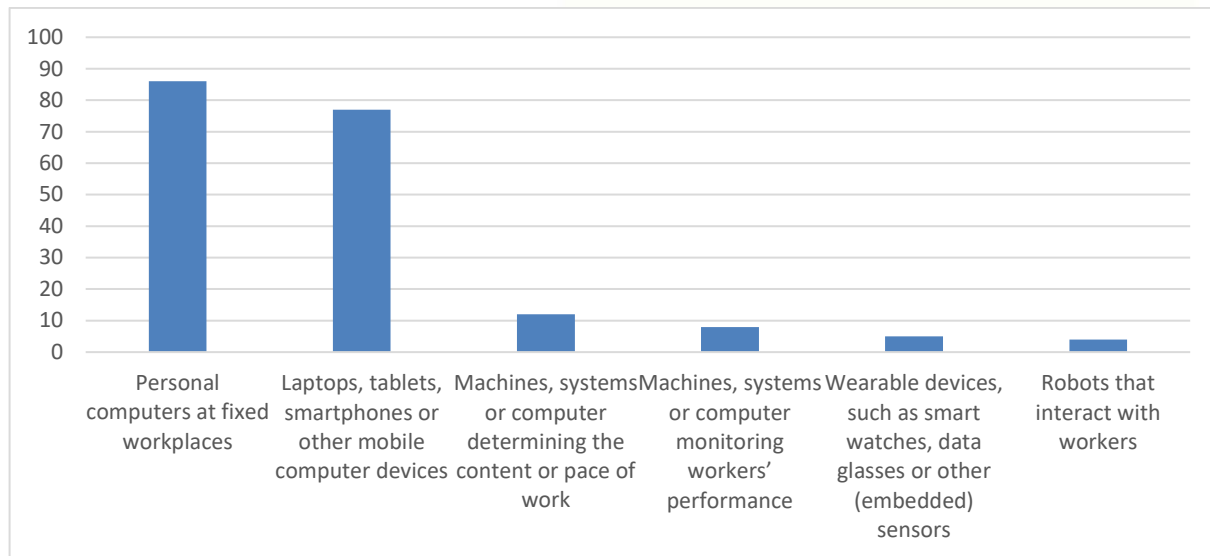


NB: The data are for workplaces in the EU27_2020 that report the presence of at least one psychosocial risk factor and that consider them to be more difficult to address than other risks, from ESENER 2019.

- ESENER 2019 shows that, among those workplaces reporting that psychosocial risk factors are more difficult to manage than other OSH risks, a reluctance to talk openly about the issues seems to be the main difficulty in addressing psychosocial risks (60 % of workplaces in the EU27_2020) (Figure 9).
- This, like all the other difficulties considered, is reported more frequently as workplace size grows.

4.2 Digitalisation

Figure 10. Percentages of workplaces where digital technologies are used, 2019

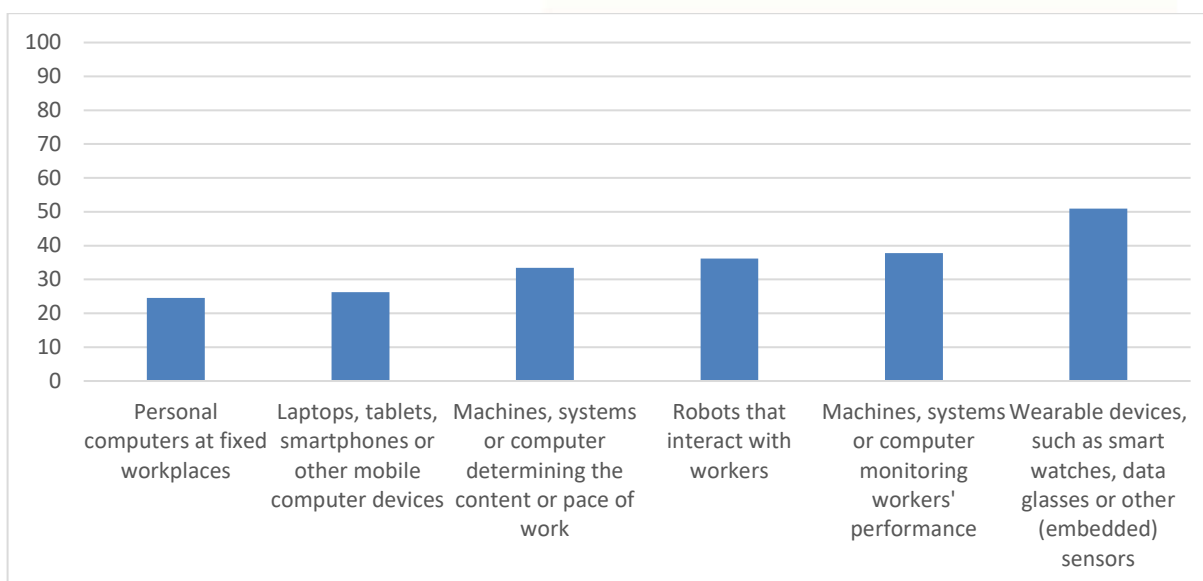


NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2019.

- To better measure the changes in the world of work mentioned above (Table 1), ESENER 2019 included a new section on the impact of digitalisation on the safety and health of workers. As expected, there is great diversity when it comes to the types of digital technologies reported by respondents. PCs at fixed workplaces (86 % of surveyed workplaces in the EU27_2020) and laptops, tablets, smartphones or other mobile devices (77 %) are frequently reported across all sectors and size classes (Figure 10).
- For the rest of technologies, there appears to be more of a size effect: they are more frequently reported by larger workplaces.
- Only 6 % of surveyed workplaces in the EU27_2020 reported using none of the digital technologies mentioned in the questionnaire.
- Among those workplaces in the EU27_2020 reporting the use of at least one the types of digital technology covered by the survey, only 24 % reported having discussed the potential impact of the use of such technologies on the safety and health of workers; the highest proportions corresponded to Hungary (58 %) and Romania (42 %). By sector, this type of discussion was reported more frequently by workplaces in information and communication (31 %) and finance and insurance (31 %).
- Focusing on the possible impacts that have been discussed, the need for continuous training to keep skills up to date comes first. Reported by 77 % of surveyed workplaces in the EU27_2020, this is the top impact across all sectors, increasing with workplace size. The next biggest impacts are prolonged sitting (65 %) and more flexibility for employees in terms of place of work and working time (63 %).

Differences by type of technology

Figure 11. Percentages of workplaces reporting discussion of the potential impacts of types of digital technology on the safety and health of workers, 2019



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020 reporting the use of at least one type of digital technology, from ESENER 2019.

- The type of technology in place seems to be associated with the likelihood of discussing its potential impact on OSH, which is highest among those workplaces reporting the use of wearable devices (51 %) and machines, systems or computers monitoring workers' performance (38 %) (Figure 11).
- A more in-depth analysis would be required for better understanding and interpretation of the results, but there seems to be an indication that those workplaces reporting the use of more sophisticated digital technologies are more aware of the potential impact of such technologies on the safety and health of their workers.
- The type of specific impact discussed appears to differ by type of technology used, too. The highest likelihood of having discussed four of the eight impacts considered corresponds to those workplaces reporting the use of machines, systems or computers to monitor workers' performance (Table 2).
- Prolonged sitting, the need to keep skills up to date and information overload are fairly commonly reported in relation to all types of technology, whereas increased work intensity or time pressure was mentioned particularly by respondents reporting the use of machines, systems or computers to monitor workers' performance.

Table 2. Most frequently discussed impacts on safety and health by type of technology, 2019

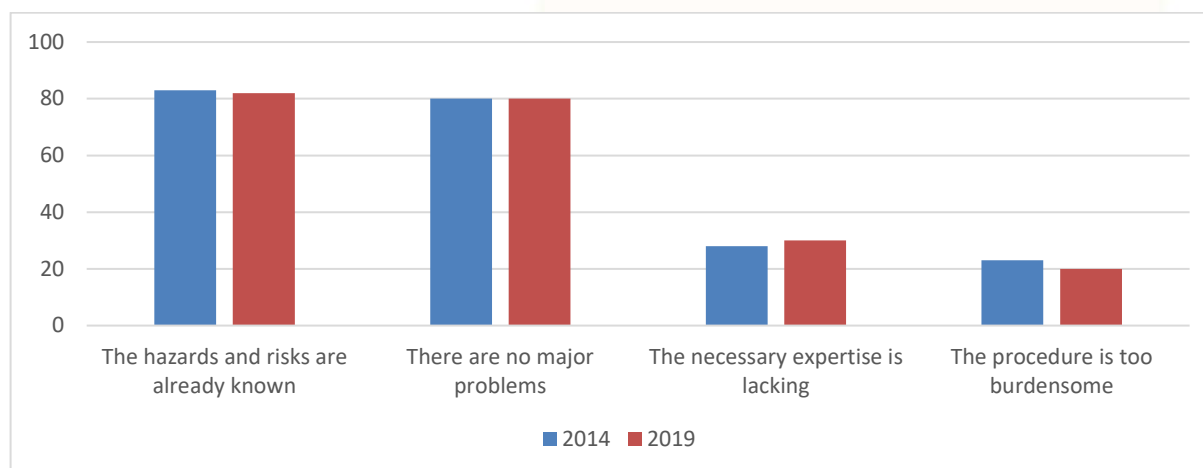
Percentages of all workplaces that report discussing particular impacts on safety and health	Percentages of workplaces using particular types of technology that report discussing these impacts
Need for continuous training to keep skills up to date (77 %)	Robots that interact with workers (85 %)
Prolonged sitting (65 %)	Personal computers at fixed workplaces (67 %)
More flexibility for employees in terms of place of work and working time (63 %)	Wearable devices, such as smart watches, data glasses or other (embedded) sensors (74 %)
Increased work intensity or time pressure (58 %)	Machines, systems or computers monitoring workers' performance (72 %)
Repetitive movements (58 %)	Machines, systems or computers monitoring workers' performance (67 %)
Information overload (52 %)	Machines, systems or computers monitoring workers' performance (58 %)
Blurring boundaries between work and private life (47 %)	Machines, systems or computers monitoring workers' performance (54 %)
Fear of job loss (21 %)	Robots that interact with workers (28 %)

NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020 reporting (1) the use of at least one type of digital technology and (2) discussing their impact on the safety and health of their workers, from ESENER 2019.

5 Drivers and barriers

5.1 No need for risk assessments? Why not?

Figure 12. Percentages of workplaces citing reasons why they do not carry out regular risk assessments, 2014 and 2019

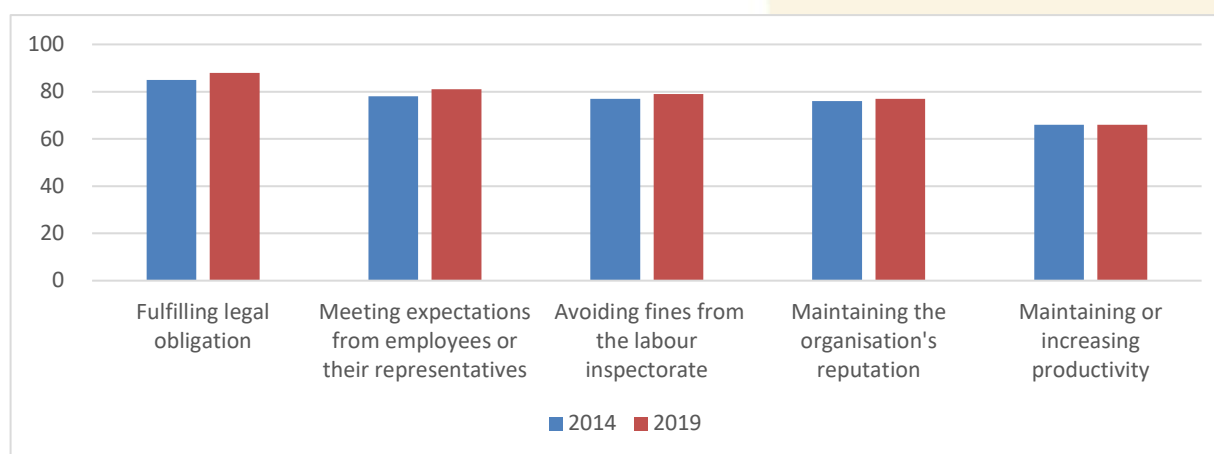


NB: The data are for workplaces in the EU27_2020 that do not carry out risk assessments regularly, from ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019.

- Looking at those workplaces that do not carry out regular risk assessments, the main reasons given for not doing so are that the risk and hazards are already known (83 % of workplaces) and that there are no major problems (80 %), as was the case in 2014 (Figure 12).
- These results represent 23 % of the surveyed workplaces, and they raise the question of whether these workplaces, particularly the smallest ones, have in reality fewer problems or whether they are simply less aware of workplace risks.
- Interestingly, workplaces in the smallest size classes report less frequently than their larger counterparts that the procedure is too burdensome.

5.2 Why are workplaces managing OSH?

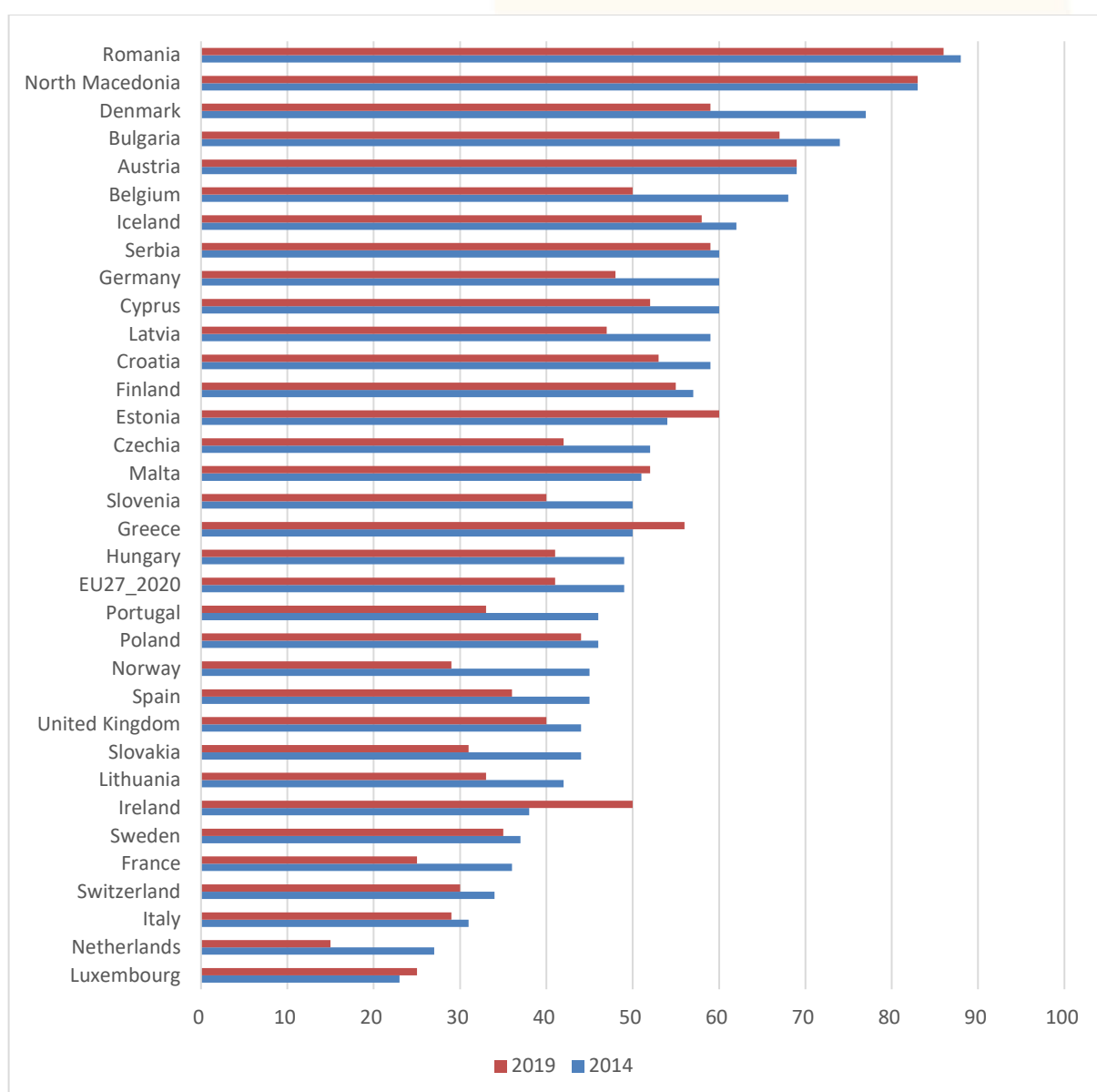
Figure 13. Percentages of workplaces citing major reasons for addressing safety and health, 2014 and 2019



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2014 and ESENER 2019.

- Moving on to the reasons that motivate workplaces to manage OSH, fulfilling a legal obligation is reported as a major reason by 88 % of workplaces in the EU27_2020, slightly up from 85 % in 2014 (Figure 13). There is a positive correlation with workplace size, whereas by country the figures range from 70 % of workplaces in Denmark to 97 % in Portugal.
- The second most important driver for action on OSH is 'meeting expectations from employees or their representatives'. ESENER 2019 shows that four in five workplaces that carry out regular risk assessments in the EU27_2020 (80 %; 81 % in 2014) report involving their employees in the design and implementation of measures following a risk assessment.
- While 'avoiding fines from the labour inspectorate' appears as an important motivator for managing OSH, it is interesting to interpret this finding in the context of the workplaces that report having had a visit from the labour inspectorate, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Percentages of workplaces visited by the labour inspectorate in the 3 years prior to the survey, by country, 2019 and 2014

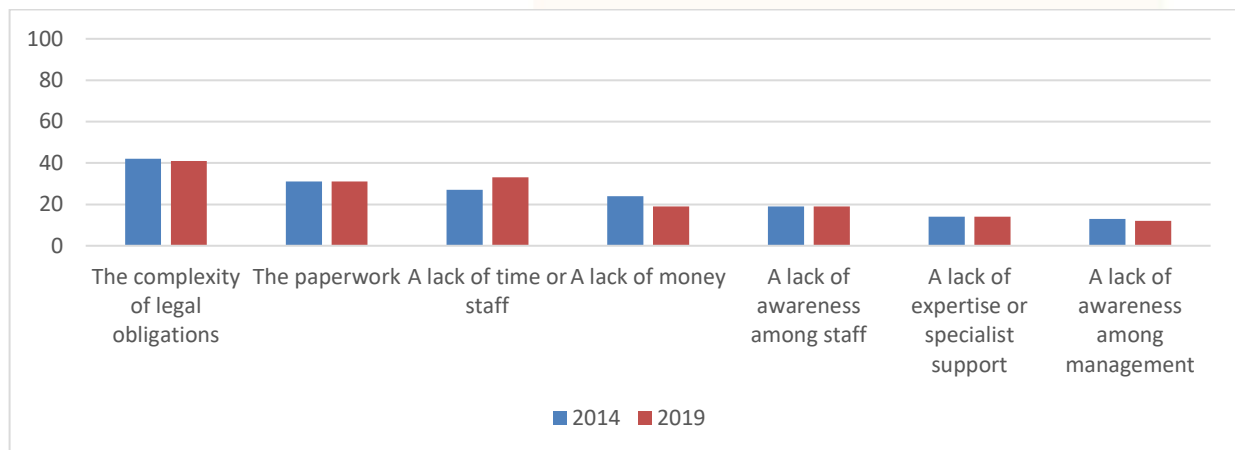


NB: The data are for all workplaces in all 33 countries, from ESENER 2019 and ESENER 2014.

- While avoiding fines from the labour inspectorate is an important motivator for managing OSH, since 2014 there has been a reduction in the proportion of workplaces that report having had a visit from the labour inspectorate in the 3 years prior to the survey: 41 % in 2019, down from 49 % in 2014 (Figure 14).
- The biggest reductions were reported in Denmark (down from 77 % to 59 %) and Belgium (68 % to 50 %). Ireland, Greece, Estonia Luxembourg and Malta are the only countries showing an upward trend. The reduction is evident across all size classes and all sectors.

5.3 What makes managing OSH difficult?

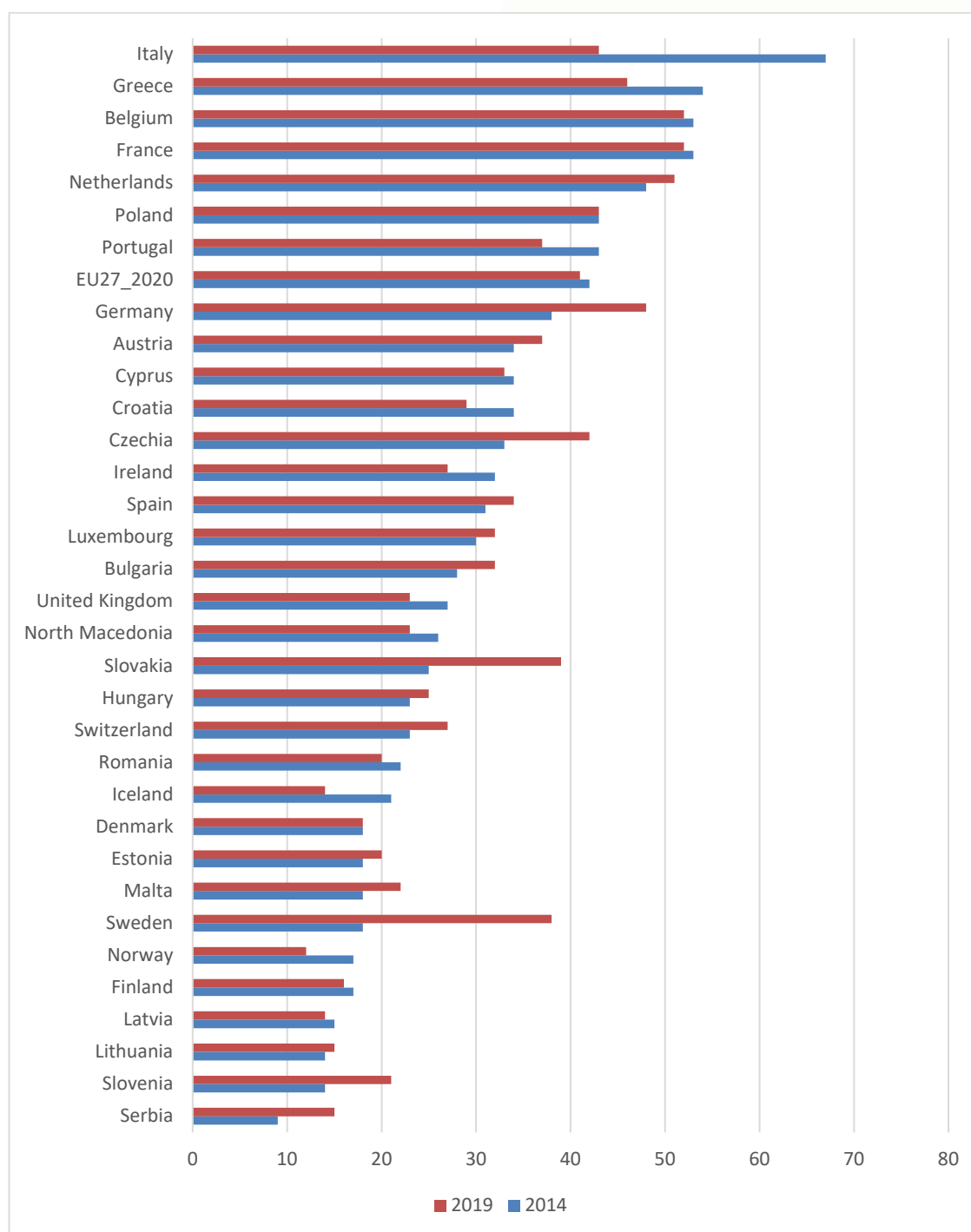
Figure 15. Percentages of workplaces reporting major difficulties in addressing safety and health, 2019 and 2014



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, from ESENER 2019 and ESENER 2014.

- The complexity of legal obligations is still reported as a major difficulty in addressing OSH by 41 % of workplaces in the EU27_2020, slightly down from 42 % in 2014 (Figure 15).
- While there was a slight drop in the proportions of workplaces reporting most factors as barriers, a lack of time or staff shows an increase from 27 % to 33 %, becoming the second most frequently reported factor. This is the case in particular among workplaces in the Netherlands (39 %) and Luxembourg (36 %).

Figure 16. Percentages of workplaces reporting the complexity of legal obligations as a major difficulty in addressing safety and health, by country, 2019 and 2014

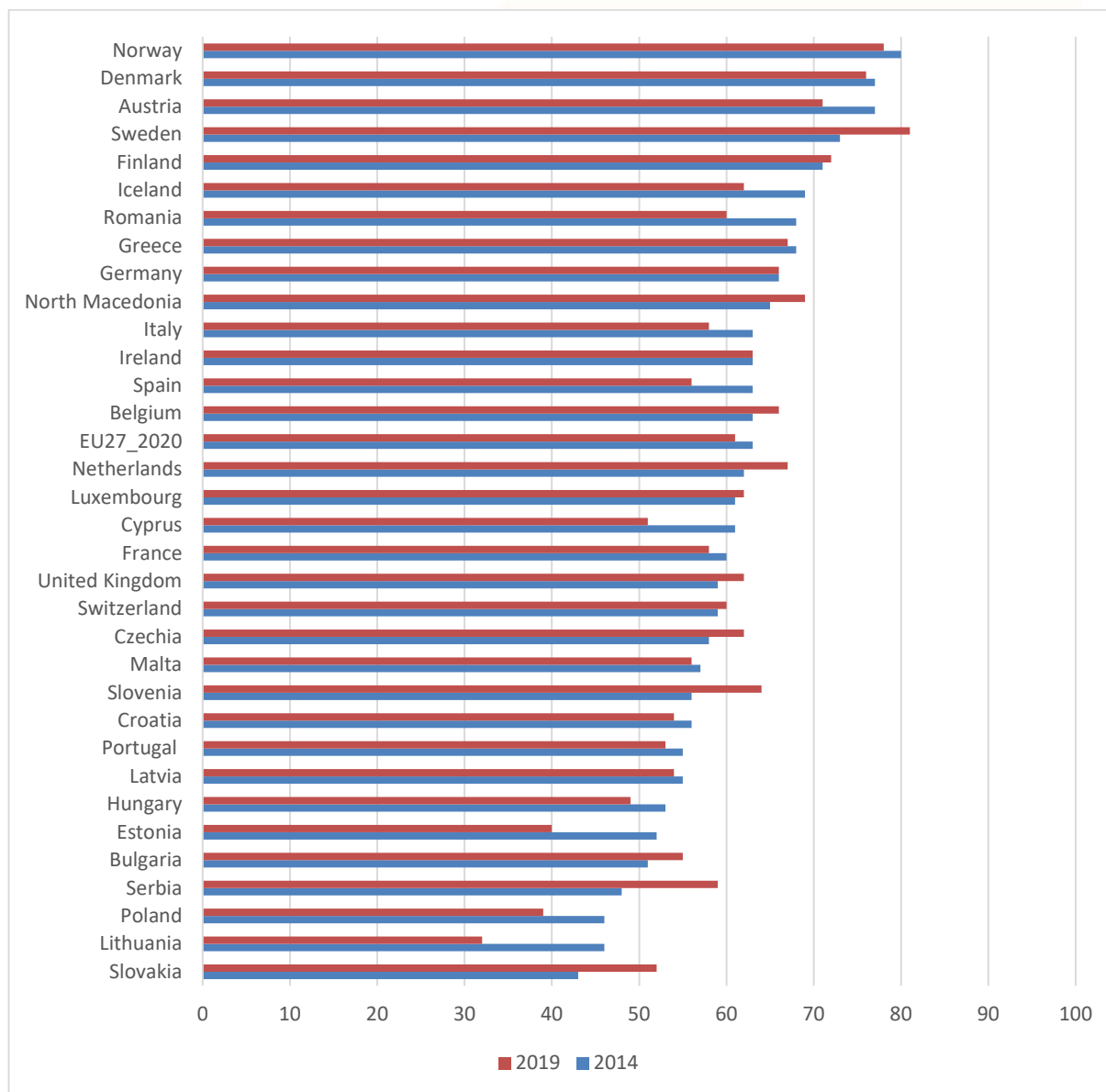


NB: The data are for all workplaces in all 33 countries, from ESENER 2019 and ESENER 2014.

- The findings by country show a heterogeneous picture of the perception of the complexity of legal obligations. The highest proportions of workplaces regarding complex legal obligations as a barrier are found in Belgium and France (52 % of workplaces), while the lowest are found in Latvia (14 %), Lithuania (15 %) and Finland (16 %) (Figure 16).
- It is revealing to see the remarkable drop witnessed in Italy (down from 67 % of workplaces in 2014 to 43 % in 2019), which helps in interpreting this indicator. It may be that, rather than measuring the complexity of legal obligations per se, this question picks up on modifications and updates to the legislation, changes that may be perceived as difficult by the respondents as they adapt to the new requirements. In the case of Italy, the findings from 2014 probably picked up on the implementation of major revisions to the Italian legislation, which took effect from 2011.

6 Worker involvement

Figure 17. Percentages of workplaces that involve workers in measures to address psychosocial risks, by country, 2019 and 2014

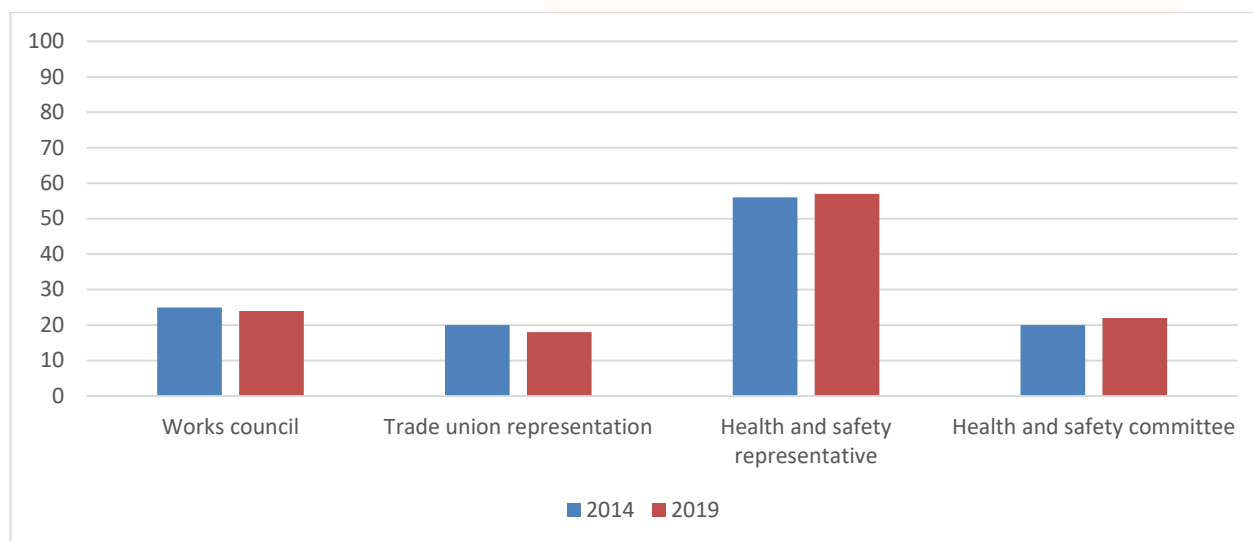


NB: The data are for all workplaces reporting use of measures to prevent psychosocial risks in the 3 years prior to the survey, from ESENER 2019 and ESENER 2014.

- As regards employee participation, and focusing on workplaces that reported using measures to prevent psychosocial risks in the 3 years prior to the survey, 61 % of respondents in the EU27_2020 indicate that employees had a role in the design and set-up of such measures, slightly down from 63 % in 2014 (Figure 17).
- These findings vary by country, from 81 % of workplaces in Sweden (up from 73 % in 2014) to 32 % in Lithuania (down from 46 % in 2014).
- There are several countries where this figure has increased since 2014, such as Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Netherlands and Bulgaria, among others. However, several countries have witnessed clear drops over the past 5 years: Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Cyprus, Spain, Romania and Austria.

- Because of the nature of psychosocial risks, measures in this area should include direct worker involvement and an especially high degree of collaboration from all actors in the workplace, but the findings indicate that this is not consistently the case.

Figure 18. Percentages of workplaces reporting forms of employee representation, 2019 and 2014



NB: The data are for all workplaces in the EU27_2020, with workplace size depending on national thresholds for these forms of representation, from ESENER 2019 and ESENER 2014.

- A health and safety representative was the most frequently reported form of employee representation, by 57 % of workplaces in the EU27_2020, slightly higher than in 2014 (Figure 18).
- Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning (71 %), education (67 %) and mining and quarrying (67 %) are the sectors most likely to report some form of employee representation.
- As expected, these findings are largely driven by workplace size.

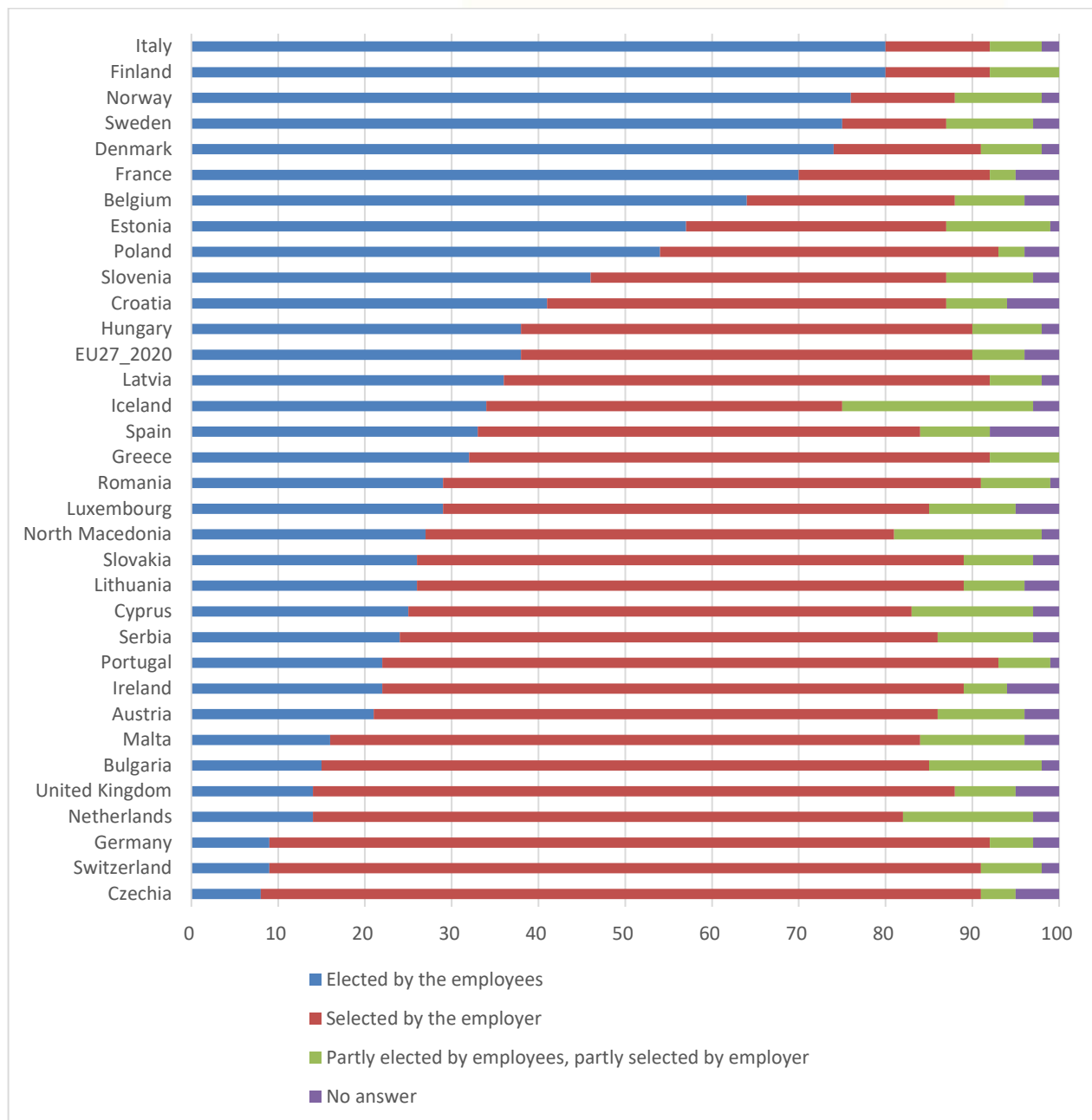
Table 3. Percentages of workplaces with no form of employee representation, by country, 2019

Country	%	Country	%
Portugal	68	Estonia	33
Latvia	63	Croatia	33
Poland	61	Iceland	32
Greece	60	Luxembourg	28
Belgium	57	Austria	27
France	56	Germany	26
Slovenia	52	Slovakia	26
Netherlands	51	Finland	25
Switzerland	50	Sweden	23
Hungary	49	Denmark	22
Cyprus	43	Ireland	22
North Macedonia	43	United Kingdom	22
Spain	42	Italy	16
Malta	36	Norway	14
EU27_2020	36	Bulgaria	11
Czechia	34	Lithuania	11
Serbia	34	Romania	11

NB: The data are for all workplaces in all 33 countries, with workplace size depending on national thresholds for these forms of representation, from ESENER 2019.

- Interestingly, more than a third of workplaces in the EU27_2020 (36 %) had none of these forms of employee representation, the proportions being highest in Portugal (68 %), Latvia (63 %) and Poland (61 %). See Table 3.

Figure 19. Percentages of workplaces that appoint health and safety representatives, by country, 2019



NB: The data are for all workplaces in all 33 countries, with workplace size depending on national thresholds for these forms of representation, from ESENER 2019.

- ESENER 2019 asked respondents about the appointment of health and safety representatives, and the findings reveal a very diverse picture across countries, reflecting the different national frameworks (Figure 19).

- More than half (52 %) of workplaces in the EU27_2020 report having a health and safety representative selected by the employer, the highest proportions corresponding to Germany and Czechia (83 % of workplaces).
- Around a third of the surveyed workplaces (38 %) reported that their health and safety representatives are elected by the employees, the proportions being highest in Finland and Italy (80 %) and Sweden (75 %).
- Around 15 % of workplaces in the Netherlands and 14 % in Cyprus reported that health and safety representatives were partly elected by the employees and partly selected by the employer.

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