



Healthy Workplaces for All Ages

Promoting a sustainable working life

**Good practices for Healthy
Workplaces: Let's learn
from each other**

Belgrade
Serbia

16 – 18 March 2017



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The World Organization of Workers (WOW), in cooperation with the European Center for Workers' Questions (EZA) and the Autonomous Trade Union of Employees in Banks, Insurance Companies and other Financial Organizations of Serbia (SS BOFOS), with the support of the European Commission organized a seminar on the theme: **“Good practices for Healthy Workplaces: Let’s learn from each other”**, which was held in Belgrade from 16 to 18 March 2017 at the hotel Moscow. Seminar was focused on three important issues: the safety and health at work as an issue within the framework of social dialogue with the examples of good practice; the campaign of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work **2016–17 Campaign: Healthy Workplaces for All Ages**; as well as the prevention of stress as part of a set of issues related to safety and health at work.





Sigrid Schraml, General Secretary of the European Center for Workers' Questions (EZA), at the beginning of the seminar, conveyed the greetings of the EZA President and Vice-president and gave a few important details about the EZA.

- EZA is the European network of 171 members from 29 European countries, representing trade unions, socio-cultural organizations of workers, research institutions... Our work is based on Christian values. It is by the European Commission's funds that we support the education of our members. Our goal is not only to transfer knowledge, but to enable people to act in accordance with the knowledge transferred.

EZA is a partner of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and for this I welcome Mr. Tsvetomir Tsanev, project manager at the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work - EU OSHA, and I thank you for enabling us to hold this seminar, said **Sigrid Schraml**.

Bjørn van Heusden, executive secretary of the World Organization of Workers (WOW), said that the WOW has been EZA affiliate for many years.

-The theme of the seminar is very interesting and topical, and we talked about it at the seminar in Zagreb, said **Bjørn van Heusden**.



Mara Erdelj, President of the SS BOFOS wished welcome to all participants and opened the seminar.



Tsvetomir Tsanev informed participants that the seat of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work - EU OSHA is located in Bilbao, Spain.

- The Agency is a tripartite organization, but we do not prepare the legislation, we are the ones who spread the information. Our current **2016–17 Campaign: Healthy Workplaces for All Ages**; addresses challenges concerning health and safety at work in connection with age. The focus of interest is the collection of information, and Mr. Miodrag Loncović is our regional representative. As you know, our European partner is EZA, and in addition to our network of social partners are the media that disseminate information.

- We are witnesses to the fact that people today live longer, the population is aging, the birth rate is low and older people are employed, and it is necessary to reform the pension system to reduce the burden on the government. The main objective of our campaign is to promote the sustainable work and healthy aging. Lifelong learning of older workers is important. Social dialogue is vital for the successful implementation of all the measures adopted. *It is better to invest in*



measures of aging workforce management, rather than losing experienced workers, said Tsvetomir Tsanev.





Miodrag Loncović, adviser in the Department for Safety and Health at Work at the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs said that the largest responsibility is on the employer, because he needs to provide a healthy environment. Regarding health and safety at work, our Law provides that the on the Committee on health and safety at work there is a greater number of representatives of employees than those of the employers'. A characteristic of our system is that all those who are engaged in activities related to health and safety at work need to pass the expert examination.

Our regulations require employers to assess the risks relating to the stress at work, i.e. to assess the risks arising from stress at work. If we do not manage stress in the workplace, we need to be

aware of the fact that long-term exposure to stress triggers the disease, said Miodrag Loncović and mentioned some of the stressors in the workplace. Stressors related to job content can be the work environment and work equipment (unfavorable work environment, unavailable, unreliable, inadequate or faulty equipment), overloading workload, tasks allocation, plan, the dynamics and pace of work (too much or too little work, inadequate tasks allocation, work under pressure, long hours, etc.). There are stressors relating to the organizational context, such as organizational structure and climate (poor communication, lack of support in the process of problem solving and personal development) role in the organization (a large number of roles, ambiguous roles, conflict of roles) developments in the organization and career (pressure for continuous improvement, learning and training, career stagnation, uncertainty, job insecurity).

Another type of stressors are decision-making and control over the work situation (insufficient participation in planning and decision-making, lack of control over the work process) and interpersonal relationships at the work (physical or social isolation, poor relations with superior, conflicts with colleagues).

- Exposure to stress is one of the biggest risks in the workplace (as indicated by 53% of workers), 27% of workers suffer from stress, depression or anxiety caused or aggravated by work, said Loncović (Eurobarometer data (2014)).

What the employer must do is risk assessment. There are two models of risk assessment: method of prevention 5-P + 5-S (M.Č., 2008), and the method for risk assessment and control of stress (Cox, Griffiths and Rial-Gonzalez, 2000), mentioned **Miodrag Loncović**.

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Peter Maschat from Gewerkschaft Öffentlicher Dienst - GöD from Austria, said that Austria is faced with the issue of raising the age limit for retirement.

- The Employment Service offers programs for training and education of older employees. As regards the harmonization of private and business life, there is a possibility of parental leave and similar benefits, but at the same time we suffer the pressure of the economy to make working hours more flexible. Facilities for safeguarding children are not in line with the working hours of employees in Austria. I come from the health sector and the issue of stress is very important in this sector. In particular stress is the most important problem faced by employees in the health sector and then come problems such as long standing. We need clearly set tasks, for unclear situation leads to stress.

We are a country in which there is a lot of overtime and it should be reduced. Mobbing is a widespread phenomenon. Therefore, we advocate for the active prevention of mobbing, said **Peter Maschat**.

Diana Angelova, from the Federation of Trade Unions of Machinery Manufacturers and Metalworkers "PODKREPA" said that 97 percent of companies in Bulgaria are dealing with OSH issues. - We have a national, branch and regional Council for OSH. Difficulties in relation to OSH are that communication, in terms of social dialogue between the institutions, is tough and in addition it is very difficult to get experts in OSH, said **Diana Angelova**.



Bruno Machiels of the European Platform for Social Integration (EPSINE) from Belgium stated that the issues of health and safety at work in this country fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor and Federal Public Service that deals with labor issues and social dialogue. Labor Inspection controls the implementation of OSH standards. He presented the key points of European OSH strategy (prevention in small and medium-sized enterprises, prevention of existing, new and emerging OSH risks, and demographic changes especially workforce ageing.

- Belgian strategy on OSH include: promoting a healthy work environment, greater participation in the labor market, strengthening the prevention and culture of prevention. Some of the topics dealt with by the media and political factors that are related to OSH are: burn-out syndrome and stress, reintegration into the workplace after a long illness and feasible work, said **Bruno Machiels**.



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Bjørn van Heusden, executive secretary of the World Organization of Workers (WOW) submitted a report for the Czech Republic as their representative left due to health worsening reasons.

- By 2001 OHS regulations have been completed. Previously, employees of 50+ have been discriminated against by employers employing only young people. In the Czech Republic the biggest problems related to OSH, are injuries at work with machines and back pain due to carrying the load. As for stress, employers have an obligation when setting norms in the workplace to deal with the issue of stress, said **Bjørn van Heusden**.

that employers in Lithuania invested a lot of efforts in risk assessment at work and on the implementation of protective measures, as well as on conflict management.

They also said that some employers in an effort to improve conditions at work even offer massage if it is needed by workers. We have people in companies that deal with mobbing and stress, all psycho-social risks are assessed, and social dialogue is at a high level, emphasized the representatives of the LDF from Lithuania.



Daiva Kriksciuniene and **Lukas Mulevicius** from the LDF of Lithuania said

Goce Selovski, the President of the Union of Financial Organizations of Macedonia (SFDM) said that in Macedonia at the national level there was the Association for OSH to communicate with the government, unions and employers.

-All regulations are given to the Association for opinion. In Macedonia there is only one legal provision concerning older workers reading that “older workers enjoy special protection”, i.e. they cannot work “overtime at night, without their consent”.



Zoran Nedeljković, Executive Director of “Rudnik (mine) Flotation” and **Ljiljana Obrenović**, Advisor for Environmental issues of the same company, presented “The comprehensive implementation of safe and healthy working conditions for all employees with continuous application and amendment of the Act on risk assessment.”

- The new owner of “Rudnik” realized that workers were more valuable than what they dug out. We are all children of the miners, and 70% of employees in the “Rudnik” are from the place in the vicinity of the mine. Privatization of “Rudnik” is one of the four most successful privatizations in Serbia as assessed by the Government, NALED, but also by our employees. With our unions, we agreed and came to the conclusion that we all look at the “same side”. Successful privatization won. Today, we employ 430 workers, before privatization, we employed 200 people, said **Zoran Nedeljković**. **Ljiljana Obrenović** says that today it is very difficult to find experienced miners. – An experienced miner can train three young miners, and at the same time he achieves good results at his workplace. We keep a parole: If you cannot do a job that you love, you can love a job you do. In “Rudnik”, 35 miners from the closed down mines “Kratovo” and “Zletovo” in Macedonia

are now working. They work 20 days with us, and then they return to Macedonia. They have a free shuttle to Macedonia and back and are provided with accommodation in Serbia. We permanently seek vacant miners’ workplaces applications in our mine.

-Rudnik” has introduced an integrated management system with which we better monitor production and security systems. Each worker receives a brochure regarding OSH and there is a constant training on OSH going on. Older workers have very good conditions for the extension of working life that is twice as higher earnings at newly found workplace than their pension if they retire. They have an increased number of days for vacation, days off for religious holidays, possibility of visiting theater performances by favourable prices, different tours.

The Director of “Rudnik” has considerably invested in the House of Culture. We allocate jubilee awards for 10, 20 and 30 years of service. After privatization no occupational disease was recorded in the company. We regularly organize training for miners on the use of chemicals in the “Rudnik”. We also replace hazardous chemicals with less hazardous which have an impact not only on OSH, but also on environmental protection, said **Ljiljana Obrenović**.



Chris Walsh, executive director, Wise Age Ltd. and a member of the European organization AGE Platform Europe from Great Britain, said that AGE Platform is an excellent platform for the dissemination of good practice.

- We have more people aged over 50 who are still working. The age limit for retirement in the UK for women was raised from 65 to 67 years of age, and for men from 60 to 65 years, but soon, women will be equalized with men, because the men complained to the court asking for equal conditions, so it's a "Pyrrhic victory". Nowadays, 70 % of the employed are older than 50 in the UK. Unfortunately, today we have a large number of unemployed who are older than 50, because

when they get fired it is difficult for them to find new employment. If we are already being asked to work longer then the least we can do is to apply pressure in order to enable older workers employment. Pensions are reduced and are unstable.

Older people remember and therefore they are an important resource. For example, when the oldest workers employed by the London Stock Exchange retire, there remains no one who remembers the causes of the financial crisis and then the remaining ones think that such a crisis will not happen again. Older workers can become trainers, supervisors. Older workers offer support to young people, not threaten them - do not take up their places. McDonald's has conducted a survey-they hired older workers in certain stores - and precisely these stores recorded a higher profit, said **Chris Walsh**.

Dragoljub Božin, the Chairman of the SS BOFOS Statutory Committee and legal advisor, and the Chairman of the Health and Safety at Work Committee in the Vojvodjanska bank said that older workers were solid support in the productivity of each company.

- Occupational medicine plays a key role. Physicians should be in a position to be able to monitor how the aging process is reflected in the productivity of employees. Dragoljub Božin, pointed out that the active participation of employees in the OSH – was the basics of success of any management system; on the other hand the employer is obliged to consult with workers and their representatives and enable them to participate in the consideration of issues regarding OSH.





As some of the most important tasks of the Committee for OSH he cited improving the state of OSH, condition monitoring, making proposals and recommendations for the improvement of OSH, troubleshoot OSH. - Committee for OSH is responsible for the identification of problems and making proposals for solving them. An employee is responsible to communicate the problem to the immediate superior or the employer, and if the problem persists, to contact a member of the Committee of OSH. The tasks of the OSH are to promote safe work, to assist in creating a safe and healthy workplace, to propose actions to improve the programs of OSH.

The role of the OSH is consultative. It is essential to create with all employees a security instinct to recognize the risks to the safety and health at work and that is the role the Board of OSH, said **Dragoljub Božin**.



Helena Koren, a psychologist from the Croatian Institute for Health Protection and Safety at Work said that we became a **24 hour society**, because we are available 24 hours a day to the employer. - If a worker is constantly exposed to psychosocial risks he is exposed to stress as well. Psychosocial risks go beyond the **content of work** (permanent contact with the people, the lack of diversity, pointless and monotonous tasks, high uncertainty in the work), **work intensity** (too much or too little workload, time pressures, unrealistic or unattainable deadlines), **scheduling** (shift and night work, overtime ..) **working conditions** (inadequate working conditions or equipment), **organizational culture** (poor communication, lack of feedback, unclear organizational objectives), **work control** (lack of control over tasks ...), (unclear conflict and work roles), **interpersonal relationships**, (bad relationships, bad relationships with superiors, lack of social support, harassment, threats, violence)



possibilities to advance (career stagnation, impossibility to advance, low salary) **the balance between personal and professional life** (lack of harmonization of private and professional life). Burnout is an extreme reaction to stress. Risk assessment must be made for psychosocial risks. Stress is a subjective experience, and that is why the risk assessment must include a worker. The choice of preventive measures is carried out in relation to the risks. Measures should be implemented with monitoring. However, prevention measures cannot be implemented if the employer does not want to, said **Helena Koren**.

Jovan Protić, the ILO National Coordinator for Serbia pointed out that stress affects different individuals in different ways, and it is difficult for employers to determine its impact and to manage it.

- Stress causes or increases health problems. The economic and social costs of stress are very high. According to the scientific literature: alcohol addicts take 7 times more sick leaves than others, smokers require additional 3 days of sick leave per year, a victim of psychological or physical violence take seven additional days of sick leave per year. **Checkpoints for stress prevention at work** provide simple and inexpensive improvements in the workplace. Some of the **checkpoints** are: **management and justice at work** (informing employees about the politics of the workplace and strategies for the prevention of stress at work, encouraging informal communication between managers and employees, as well as among the employees and solving problems in the workplace) **requirements and control of work** (balanced distribution of job requirements among employees, the necessity of planning achievable deadlines, clearly defining the tasks and responsibilities as a measure of prevention of errors, accidents and injuries at work, employee involvement in decision-making on the organization of their work and encouraging participation of employees in the improvement of working conditions and productivity), **social support** (mutual assistance in the exchange of knowledge and experience among employees as a means of social support which prevents stress), **balance of work and family life and working hours, respect at work and protection from abusive behavior, job security, information and communication.**

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Krsto Pejović, the President of the Trade Union of Financial Organizations of Montenegro (SFOCG) stressed that the rights of corporations rose above human rights. - We cannot reduce stress, but this particular seminar is a balm. It is necessary to distinguish good and bad stress. There is a research showing that after the fear of death, the second one is the fear of losing a job. One of the recommendations of the seminar could be that we continue with our activities and through the ILO try to come up with a solution that is, to have minimum job security and minimal protection at work, said **Krsto Pejović**.

Isaias Afonso from FTDC from Portugal said that in Portugal one person a day died as a victim of injury at work. We have 30,000 accidents a year. We have to reduce the number of fatal accidents. We have a lot of illegal work and since these workers are not included in the statistics, we do not really know the exact number of accidents at work. Education and prevention are very important particularly in schools. Young people, workers-to-be need to be aware of issues related to OSH, concluded **Isaias Afonso**.

Maria Reina Martin, the President of the FIDESTRA from Portugal, said she came from the health sector. The government in Portugal is not aware of how many teachers are on sick leave.



- Stress is not recognized as a cause of health problems. However, in the education sector stress is the biggest problem that we are faced with.-



We of 65 cannot teach the same way as before, because we do not merely convey knowledge but also bring up young people, said **Maria Reina Martin**. Her recommendation is that all sectors continue to work together on the issue of OSH.

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Milan Tóth, the organization NKOS from Slovakia said that in Slovakia since 2003, both men and women retired at the age of 62. - Slovakia is struggling with high unemployment and aging. Employers can receive compensation if they hire older workers. As a recommendation **Milan Tóth** said that employers should not have to comply with OSH only on paper, but it is necessary that OSH norms and standards were implemented.

Klemen Štibelj, the organization ZD NSI from



Slovenia said that we recognized 100 times less illnesses in the workplace than we had to.

- Older workers mostly lost their jobs during the restructuring. We, as a country, do not meet a condition (for EU countries) that of all employees 50% should be older workers. This goal should be met in the next five years. In Slovenia there is a dual system of education, but it is not good enough. Employers know the importance of balancing work and family life, but they do nothing on this issue, said **Klemen Štibelj**.

Javier Morillas Gómez, from the Center for



Labor Questions (CEAT) from Spain, said that the financial sector was specific and those employed in this sector suffered from a great stress.

RTS report dedicated to the seminar:

http://www.rts.rs/page/tv/ci_story/17/rts-1/2676649/sta-radite-bre.html



After the first day of the seminar participants visited the Temple of Saint Sava and the crypt of St. Martyr Emperor Lazar.

