



EKA

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Trade Unions Organizations 16, 17 and 18 of
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Athens**

**"Occupational Health and Safety and the role on
the European Capitals' Trade Unions"**

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are the OHS conditions in your capital region. Give a brief description

The situation of OHS in Greece ranges from mediocre to poor, despite the legislative framework national or European and the improvement made during the last decades at scientific and technological level. Despite the fact that quite a few large companies have integrated provisions of law into their operations and integrated systems of professional risk management, the situation within the majority of SME's is not at all encouraging.

2. Problems with the implementation of OHS legislation

There are about 180 laws and other legal documents concerning OHS at work, which are improving constantly especially adopting new limit values of exposure to various chemical agents. Institutions of Safety Officer, Occupational Physician and the Committee of OHS introduced by the Law framework 1568/85, as well as the PD 17/96 which ratifies the Directive Framework 89/391/EC, are some of the most important legislations on OHS in Greece. The PD 17/96 imposes on companies an internal audit process, obliging every employer to have a written assessment of professional risk. Employers are also obliged to take preventive measures to protect workers. The implementation of this legislation is not satisfactory and this is directly related to the efficiency of the Labor Inspectorate.

3. **Inspectorate on OHS and efficiency problems**

A new body, the Labor Inspectorate (SEPE) was established since 1-7-1999 at the Ministry of Labor. SEPE which has both a central and a regional structure, belongs to the Ministry of Labor, dealing with:

- Monitoring and auditing of the implementation of the relevant labor legislation.
- Detection, investigation and prosecution in case of infringement of labor law.
- Supply of information and recommendations for the implementation of labor legislation.

SEPE has the following responsibilities:

- To check all working activities in the public and private sector.
- To carry out controls, measurements, to sample and search if labor legislation is respected.
- To search the causes of serious and fatal labor accidents and professional diseases.
- To examine charges and demands submitted by workers. It should be noted that accusations are submitted orally or written, with ones's name or anonymously.
- To impose administrative sanctions on infringers or to report law breakers, so they may be penalized according to law.
- To intervene for reconciliation and settlement of individual or collective labor disputes.

Inspectors of SEPE can enter freely on 24hour basis in all labor places.

In the year **2009**, SEPE carried out 24.496 controls and imposed fines amounting 2.856.000 Euros in totally 3.588 cases failures where detected. In 1.599 cases interruption of works was imposed.

4. Accidents at workplace and professional diseases

SEPE	2007	2008	2009
Declared Labor accidents	6.561	6.657	6.381
Total number of fatal	115	142	113
Fatal labor accidents related to pathological reasons	21	38	29
Fatal labor accidents excluding with pathological reasons	94	104	84
Fatal labor accidents in constructions sector (excluding pathological cases)	59	48	43
Fatal labor accidents in other sectors (excluding pathological cases)	35	56	41

Total number of fatal labor accidents

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Nr	127	188	153	145	127	111	128	115	142	113

Professional diseases:

In the year 2004 in the E.U.15, 46.280 professional diseases were identified (EUROSTAT 2004). According to the European Agency for OHS (OSHA) each year 142.000 people die due to professional diseases. (OSHA 2007). The cost of professional diseases for the year 2000 was in Germany 1.233 million .€, in Austria 29,3 million €, in Belgium 334 million €, in Denmark 67 million εκ. €, in Italy 1.068 million €, in Portugal 36,7 million €, in Switzerland 46,52 million € (EUROGIP 2004). In these costs is not included the cost for rehabilitation.

Professional diseases in Greece are established on the basis of the Article 40 of the relevant Regulation of Social Security Foundation (IKA). According to that and in order for a professional disease to be registered as such, the worker should suffer by an acute or permanent poisoning or disease included in the Article 40 .

According to article 40 there are 6 (six) main groups of professional diseases:

- Poisoning and allergic symptoms
- Infectious or parasite diseases
- Diseases due to natural causes such as variations of the air pressure, pressure and friction, sound pollution, ionizing radiation etc
- Skin diseases
- Lung diseases

The registered professional diseases in Greece were in the year 2003, 39 cases, in the year 2004, 32 cases, in the year 2005, 30 and in the year 2006, 31 (IKA annual statistics).

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
Nr of cases	39	32	30	31

On the basis of the aforementioned figures it appears that in our country there are not professional diseases in comparison to other EU countries. Unfortunately, the situation is different. We have turned a blind eye to the real figures concerning both professional diseases as well as their cost economic and social.

This happens because the accurate estimation of this cost implies the recognition, control and registration on the one hand of the damaging agents of working environment and on the other hand of professional diseases and labor accidents which constitute major control mechanisms of professional risk.

An estimation of the annual cost due to professional risk in Greece amounts to at least 3 billion EYPΩ. This cost is paid by the Social Security Fund. However is paid only by workers' contributions not by employers' contributions, despite their responsibility for the professional risk according to the law. This happens because professional diseases and labor accidents are considered as an inevitable consequence of every work, in correspondence with the risk of the invested capitals, eliminating their contribution to the professional risk.

5. Sector approach of OHS. Which sectors are more exposed in your capital region.

Constructions, naval ship repairs and shipyards , SMEs.

6. Workers most exposed to poor OHS conditions.

Young people, immigrants, women are groups most vulnerable to poor working conditions.

7. How the economic crisis affects OHS

Deregulation of labor relations, decomposition of labor law and the abolition of the social state on behalf of low labor cost, leave the workers unprotected in deteriorating working conditions.

8. Initiatives and actions of your organization on OHS issues

Protection of OHS of workers, prevention of professional risks and the improvement of labor conditions, constitute a paramount right and a necessary element of a just society.

EKA considers OHS a main issue to which constantly attention is being given and action is undertaken. This action relates to workers being informed and interventions so that competent state authorities will act.

9. Perspectives of co-operation of the European Capitals' Trade Unions on OHS, networking, common activities etc.

The existing networking between the trade unions of the European Capitals is an important background for cooperation and exchange of experiences in the area of OHS. Participation in European projects, creation of bilateral or multilateral partnerships constitute a prospective for cooperation among our organizations.