

**Trade union research on workers' health and safety  
representatives in Slovenia, March - April 2010  
Reference: Project: ETUI Code n° 953.003**

Abbreviations used in this report:

HESA= Health and Safety Department ETUI  
ETUI = European Trade Union Institute  
OSH = occupational health and safety  
ZSSS = Slovenian Association of Free Trade Unions  
ZVZD = Health and Safety at Work Act  
ZSDU = Workers Participation in Management Act  
SME = small and medium enterprise  
FDV = Faculty of Social Sciences of Ljubljana University

## **Introduction:**

Two contracts (ETUI Code n° 953.003) were signed between The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) as contractor and Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije (ZSSS – Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia) as contractee to:

1. elaborate a background documents for a trade union research on workers' health and safety representatives and health and safety committees in Slovenia, and to analyze the all necessary steps for launching the survey.
2. organise a kick-off workshop for the survey on workers health and safety representatives with participation of the leading ZSSS branch trade unions health and safety specialists. The aim of the survey was to collect practical experience of Slovenian trade unions in the support for health and safety representatives at the workplace.

Contractor:

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Represented by: Laurent Vogel, Director of the HESA Department

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See annex 2: Information on HESA and ETUI

Contractee:

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See annex 1: Promotion brochure ZSSS

ZSSS was interested to carry out the survey as in Slovenia there has been up to date no research on the work of workers representatives in spite of frequent initiatives by ZSSS in the national tripartite council for health and safety at work, the expert advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

In charge of the survey project in ZSSS were two executive secretaries of the presidency of ZSSS:

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## Legislative background

Workers' participation in health and safety at work is in Slovenia regulated by two laws:

1. Health and Safety at Work Act (ZVZD), Official Gazette of Republic Slovenia, No. 56/1999, and No. 64/2001, See Annex 3, source: [http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti\\_pdf/zvzd\\_an.pdf](http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti_pdf/zvzd_an.pdf),
2. Workers Participation in Management Act (ZSDU), Official Gazette of Republic Slovenia, No. 42/1993 and No. 45/2008 (no known translation in EN exist).

ZVZD was adopted by the Slovenian Parliament in the year 1999 and is therefore harmonised with the framework directive on introduction of measures to encourage improvements in safety and health of workers at work (89/391/EEC). See annex 4.

The framework directive 89/391/EEC stipulates in Article 11 on consultation and participation of workers inter alia that employers shall consult workers and/or their representatives and allow them to take part in discussions on all questions relating to safety and health at work. This presupposes the consultation of workers and their right to make proposals in a balanced participation in accordance with national laws and/or practices. Workers or workers' representatives with specific responsibility for the safety and health of workers shall be consulted in advance and in good time by the employer with regard to any measure which may substantially affect safety and health. They have the right to ask the employer to take appropriate measures and to submit proposals to him to that end to mitigate hazards for workers and/or to remove sources of danger. Workers and/or their representatives are entitled to appeal, in accordance, with national law and/or practice, to the authority responsible for safety and health protection at work if they consider that the measures taken and the means employed by the employer are inadequate for the purposes of ensuring safety and health at work. Workers' representatives must be given the opportunity to submit their observations during inspection visits by the competent authority.

ZVZD recognizes that ZSDU defines Slovenian national law and practices for workers participation in management called for by the framework directive 89/391/EEC. However, as ZSDU covers mainly private sector ZVZD determines its adapted use for the public sector too. The result are four possible forms of workers' representatives with specific responsibility for the safety and health at work.

An explanation is needed In principle ZSDU determines two forms of workers representatives in private sector – work council (for employers with more than 20 employees) and workers' representative (for employers with less than 20 employees). The difference is in the numbers. Just one workers' representative can be elected at employer with less than 20 employees. But a work council might have from 3 to 13 or even more members.

Further, ZSDU defines workers participation as a right and not as obligatory. This means that the workers at some individual employer might for whatever reason not choose to use the right to elect a work council. For this reason ZVZD stipulates that at those employers in private sector where no work council/workers representative has been elected as well as in public sector a workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety is to be elected.

ZVZD stipulates that employer must consult all employees if no workers representative is elected. As the assemblies of all employees during working time are costly the employers are usually interested that some form of workers representative is elected. Usually we find that no workers representatives have been elected mostly where there is no trade union organised at the employer's level. And we have to report that trade union organisation has been falling for different reasons in Slovenia too. The trade union coverage has been in the last 20 years estimated from 40 % to 26 % (since 2004). There is little evidence that any workers representatives at all are elected in SMEs.

## **The four forms elected of workers representatives are therefore:**

### Private sector:

- members of work council,
- workers' representative (at private sector employer's with less than 20 employees),
- workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at in private sector (where there is no work council elected),

### Public sector:

- workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety in public sector.

## **ZSDU defines the election rules (ZSDU gives trade unions at employer's level a major role in all the election procedures):**

- every employee employed by the employer for at least 6 months may vote;
- every employee employed by the employer for at least 12 months may be elected (NOTE: this is an obstacle for election of regional workers representatives in SMSs);
- a representative trade union or three employees may give initiative for assembly of all employees to decide if there is a majority will to elect a work council (among other things it means that elections in an enterprise are carried out on a random date and not at the same date in all enterprises as is the case in some European countries). ZSDU determines deadlines for each election phase;
- if so, writs are issued for an election and an election commission (with its committees) are designated at the assembly to carry out elections in compliance with the law. There are elaborate provisions on its structure. In case of a dispute a court decides. The elections must be carried out at least 14 days before the end of term of office of previous work council;
- The candidates may be proposed by signatures of approximately 10 % of employees or by representative trade union at employer's level. Rules of procedures may define specific workers representatives for specific groups of workers (invalids, women, young etc.). The candidates must sign an agreement to be candidate;
- The ballot is secrete;
- The election must be organised in a way that all employees are able to take part. Their free will may not be impeded. It is valid if more than 50 % of all employees took part;
- Mandate of elected is terminated before the end of term of office in case of death, termination of working contract at the enterprise, resignation or recall. In this case the non elected candidate with most votes takes over the office till the end of the term;
- The recall can be proposed by the trade union that candidated the specific workers' representative or by signature of 10 % of the employees. The request must be explained. The election commission carries out the voting;
- The cost of elections are carried by the employer.

### **The way a work council/workers' representative operates (as stipulated by ZSDU):**

- A work council elects its president who represents it. The president calls the work council's meetings.
- A work council adopts rules of procedures and in it defines its powers. As means of work among other things specific council's committees may be determined – for example to deal with OSH issues or issues of specific vulnerable groups of employees and report to the council. Maximally one third of members of those committees may be non members of the council;
- Up to 300 employees up to 2 members of the council may be professional for half of the full working time. When there are 300 to 1000 employees up to 2 members may be full time professionals. From 1000 upwards another full time professional for each 600 employees may be in office. They get equal wages as before or the average for his/her education level at employer's if that is preferable;
- Work council may invite to its meetings external experts, representatives of trade unions, employers organisations, management representatives. If agreed with the management in advance the employer must cover the expense. But minimum is 50 % of average wages time number of members of the council;
- Work council may call for the assembly of employees (even for the dislocated units) during working time and may invite the same experts. The top manager must be notified. The top manager may demand that certain issues are to be put on the agenda of the assembly. The assembly may discuss the items on the work council's agenda but may not take decisions instead of the work council;
- The meetings are held if possible during working time. Up to 5 paid hours per month at least must be secured for that by employer. The top manager must be notified;
- Members of work council have the right to at least 3 paid hours per month for consultations with other employees. An agreement with the management may be needed to make sure that it is done respecting the work process ;
- Members of work council have the right to at least 40 paid hours per year for specific training to effectively perform the role of workers' representative;
- An agreement with the management may determine more hours than the minimum set by ZSDU;
- The employer must cover necessary expense for the work of the council such as meeting room, office to receive clients, office for professional members of the council, administrative help, expenditure. A lump sum per a period may be set in the agreement with the management. Work council may use this money with its own discretion, however, in accordance with the purpose of its role. In case of dispute with the employer an arbitration is called for;
- ZSDU provides protection for the workers' representatives who act within law and collective agreement or employment contract against any disadvantage because of their activities. The wages may not be diminished, no disciplinary or indemnity procedures are tolerated;
- Work council participates in the management with its representatives in supervisory council or in management board of the enterprise. They get at least one third and at most one half of the seats. The supervisory council must at least once a year discuss the work council report on implementation of ZSDU in the enterprise. The work

council may propose the designation of a human resources member of the management board;

- Both work council and management may call a consultation meeting according to need. But as a rule they meet to consult at least once a month. The role of work council is to control the implementation of laws and collective bargains and agreements between work council and management. Work council may propose measures according to its own assessments or proposed by other employees.
- ZSDU determines issues on which work council has the right of codetermination (when its consent is needed). However, OSH is not such an issue.

**ZSDU on the role of work councils concerning OSH issues:**

- Before taking decisions employer must propose to the work council consultation among other things on OSH issues. Necessary information concerning those decisions must be provided 30 days in advance and consultation must take place at least 14 days before taking the decision. The employer must during consultation inform on intended decisions and try to reach a compromise with work council.

**ZVZD on the role of workers' representatives:**

- Employers and employees or their representatives must keep each other informed of, consult on, and take part in decisions on all issues pertaining to safety and health at work in compliance with this ZVZD and regulations governing workers' participation in management.
- An employer must ensure that works council members and workers' representative receive adequate health and safety training.
- An employer must allow employees or their representatives to take part in discussions on all questions relating health and safety at work in accordance with ZVZD and other regulations.
- The tasks referred to in the preceding paragraph shall be performed by the works council in accordance with the regulations governing workers' participation in management (ZSDU).
- The works council and trade unions must be presented the safety statement, the report on health and safety at work and the executed safety measures referred and the records on OSH.
- The works council must be consulted on any measure which might effect health and safety at work; the designation of a safety officer, the appointment of an authorised medical practitioner, the safety statement and informing of employees.
- At an employer where no works council is organised, the tasks shall be performed by the workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work.
- The workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work must be ensured of mode of work and rights which apply to a works council (ZSDU).
- In the election of a workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work, the provisions regulating the election of a works council, which are prescribed by the Workers' Participation in Management Act, shall be reasonably applied.

- A works council or workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work can demand that an employer adopt suitable measures for the reduction or elimination of health and safety risks in the workplace.
- A works council or workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work may request an inspection by the Labour Inspectorate if it is believed that an employer has failed to provide adequate safety measures.
- A representative of a works council or the workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work may be present at any inspection by the Labour Inspectorate or by any other body when such is inspecting the safeguarding of health and safety at work.
- An employer must inform the works council or the workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work, and the trade unions at an employer as to the findings, suggestions and measures effected by an inspection body.
- An employee must immediately inform his employer through workers' representatives either orally or in writing of any deficiency, health risk, defect or other occurrence that may endanger his own health and safety at work or those of other employees.
- A fine of not less than .... shall be imposed on an employer, if he fails to:
  - allow employees or their representatives to take part in discussions on all questions relating health and safety at work in accordance with ZVZD and other regulations;
  - submit to the works council the safety statement, the report on health and safety at work as well as the executed safety measures, and the records;
  - consult the works council on any measure which might effect health and safety at work; the designation of a safety officer; the appointment of an authorised medical practitioner; the safety statement; and informing of employees.

**In short:** Slovenian legislation determines the form of workers participation in management on the field of OSH in the form of periodical (once per month at least) consultations between management (preventive services take part in consultations in the management team) and (in most cases) work councils. The rules for participation are regulated by legislation and also by rules of procedures of the work councils. A work council may form a committee for health and safety as its standing working group.

It is forbidden for a work council to use methods of industrial conflict. A strike can therefore be organised only by a trade union. The method of operation for work council (or any other form of workers' representative) is consultation. The employer must discuss any proposal made by workers representatives but is not obliged to act upon it. This is supposed to be in line with the principle of employer's full liability for OSH decisions.

Close cooperation between work council and trade union at employer's level is, therefore, called for in case that employer doesn't heed work council's proposals. A trade union may collectively bargain for them or even organise a strike.

It is very important that a trade union is active concerning the election of work council and candidates electable candidates that are friends of trade union. Cases have been, namely, noted in Slovenia where work councils have started to operate as a competitor and not as an ally to the trade union. Even though that ZSDU provides an option for recall of a member of work council the procedure is time consuming and complex. In practice trade union prefers to just wait for the end of term of office of a member of the work council that lost their support.

**The June 2009 analysis of the Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the implementation of ZVZD in the period 1999 – 2009 (internal document that was distributed at the tripartite 2010 pre-negotiation consultations on amending ZVZD):**

OUR COMMENT: Slovenia is EU record holder for top percentage of employers with external preventive OSH services (71 % according to 2009 ESENER survey, <http://osha.europa.eu/en/riskobservatory/enterprise-survey/enterprise-survey-esener>).

This is the result of the economic crises in early 1990s when restructuring of the economy abolished most of the internal OSH services. The unemployed OSH experts at that time started to offer their external OSH services on the market. List of all the holders of OSH license is on

[http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/vzd/vpisnik\\_vsi.pdf](http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/vzd/vpisnik_vsi.pdf)

- Very often the role of preventive OSH medicine in risk assessment is insufficient.
- Practically no occupational illnesses in Slovenia are reported since 1990.

OUR COMMENT: This is may be so because the occupational health experts (so called employer's authorised medical practitioner) are financially dependent on the employers (they are contracted as external services). The other reason is non defined procedure of occupational illnesses verification.

- Labour inspectorate reports about numerous cases where independence of OSH experts (safety engineers) was also not respected by the employer.
- Labour inspectorate reports that only 5 % of employers (SMEs included) still haven't their risk assessment in writing. But those safety statements with risk assessment are often of poor quality. Those prepared by external OSH services are often not specific and lack safety measures to be carried out to eliminate risks. Just 17 % of employers have risk assessment with all necessary elements that are well understood both by management and employees.
- Labour inspectorate states that especially employers with external OSH preventive services are implementing OSH legislation just formally. Such employers often don't know the contents of the risk assessment. It is often so extensive that it is not transparent and not offering true picture of the circumstances. The OSH training based on it is not specific. But employers are not objecting as they seem interested just in formal complying with the legislation to avoid fines. External services are also not present to carry out internal control of implementation.
- Labour ministry thinks that a reform of the OSH preventive services licensing is in order.
- Labour inspectorate is supervising OSH at employer's level using parameters such as record of OSH data, personal protective equipment, preventive health checks, safety statement with risk assessment, information obligation to the inspectorate, working environment measurements, working equipment control and also OSH information



to the workers, workers training and workers OSH participation. To advise not just to the management but also to the employees and workers representatives is allegedly a labour inspector's duty.

- Labour inspectorate reports that in SMEs the participation of workers as a rule takes part as direct consultation of the management with all the employees at the assemblies. At larger employers' the work councils have taken the role of intermediaries between the employees and the management.
- Ministry thinks there is need for more detailed definition of workers OSH representative in ZVZD.
- Ministry noted that ZSSS proposed amendment of the legislation that would allow the election of regional worker OSH representative for SMEs. (However, the employers organisations in 2010 strongly opposed this.)
- Labour inspectorate states that the activity of workers representatives is mostly directed in vindicating workers rights and not in awareness raising. Labour inspectorate remarked on not sufficient knowledge of workers representatives on OSH issues.
- Too formal training of workers was specifically mentioned. The content of training is often too general and not specific to the identified hazards. On other hand the license to external OSH services to train workers was the most often given: 294 licenses out of 354 license holder in 2 million population Slovenia!
- OSH information to workers is, however, improving according to labour inspectorate.
- Employers as a rule do not oppose to the instruction of the labour inspectorate to propose to the employees to elect workers OSH representatives!
- In the case of imminent danger at workplace the employees often do not turn for help either to management nor to work council but directly to the labour inspectorate. Employees are aware that legislation offers them protection if they refuse to work in dangerous conditions but they do not use it as they fear economic sanctions of the employer. There is no evidence that this right has been ever used.

## **Kick-off workshop for the survey on workers health and safety representatives with participation of the leading ZSSS branch trade unions health and safety specialists, 30 March 2010**

The kick off workshop was organised by two executive secretaries P ZSSS Lučka Böhm (responsible for health and safety at work) and Marjan Urbanč (responsible for workers participation). Participants were branch trade union and regional ZSSS offices professionals, responsible for workers participation in the field of safety and health at work both in private and public sector.

The workshop was moderated by Marjan Urbanč.

After introductory discussion following decisions were taken:

- A survey of workers OSH representatives in Slovenia is to be carried out using the ETUI international questionnaire adapted to Slovenian national legislation,
- To achieve representativity the survey should deliver 300 filled in questionnaires ,
- The distribution of the questionnaires will be carried out according to the draft plan by activity and region prepared by Marjan Urbanč,
- The deadlines for the different phases of the survey are determined according to the ETUI-ZSSS contract,
- Trade union regional professionals will contact TU shop stewards at employer level who will in turn get the questionnaires in the hands of the workers OSH representatives,
- The filled in questionnaires will be analysed by a competent researcher (dr. Slavko Kurdija of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, [http://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/English/Office\\_IC/](http://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/English/Office_IC/) was contracted after the workshop),
- The results of the survey will be published.

See annex 5: Minutes of the Kick-off workshop for the survey on workers health and safety representatives with participation of the leading ZSSS branch trade unions health and safety specialists on 30 March 2010 with attendance list

## Survey questionnaire:

The questionnaire was adapted using the ETUI English questionnaire for Belgium. The questionnaire had to be adapted to Slovenian OSH legislation concerning the structure and election and ways of operation of Slovenian OSH workers representatives. However, the questions concerning the results of work and workers participation could be used with minimum adaptation. The translation and adaptation was made by executive secretaries P ZSSS Lučka Böhm and Marjan Urbanč.

### **The questionnaire had several parts:**

- Company identification details
- Details on the person that filled in the questionnaire
- Work council details
- Internal or external prevention services
- Information on specific hazards at your employer's
- Part One: The operation of the work council / workers' OSH representative in year 2008 and 2009 (20 questions)
- Part Two: Management of health and safety at work at your employer's (14 questions)
- Part Three: The place and influence of work council/workers OSH representatives in managing health and safety at work in the company (15 questions)
- Evaluation of the questionnaire of the respondent

The questionnaire was accompanied with the following introductory message. The purpose of it was to explain the reasons for the survey and to stimulate participation in the survey by promising to send the final report to the participants.

*“Honoured member of work council / workers OSH representative!*

*We invite you to fill in this questionnaire and take part in the first survey on the role and work conditions of work councils / workers OSH representatives in Slovenia. Your answers will make it possible for us to demand European and Slovenian legislation and collective bargains to support your role to represent the interest of employees for safe and healthy work. We will let you know the results of the analysis of the survey. We are sure that they interest you too.*

*Thank you for your taking part !*

*ZSSS, April – May 2010”*

See annex 6: Survey of workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work, ZSSS, April – May 2010

## The contracted experts

ZSSS contracted social sciences researchers to analyse the filled in questionnaires:

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Established in 1961, the Faculty of Social Sciences (FDV) is one of the largest members of the University of Ljubljana. It has over 5,100 students in 30 undergraduate and graduate study programs. The Institute of Social Sciences, with its 18 research centres, forms part of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre (CJMMK) was founded in 1966. It has conducted the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey (SPOS) regularly since 1968 and remains a basic source of empirical data for social scientists in Slovenia. The Centre has been involved in numerous distinguished national and cross-national projects (e.g., World Values Survey, ISSP, European Values Survey, Ostbarometer, Cross-national Survey of Electoral Systems) on a bilateral and multilateral basis. CJMMK's extensive database includes indicators for a wide variety of relevant topics for social science researchers; among them are social stratification, quality of life, national identity, political culture, role of government, religion, family values, work values, health indicators, political orientations, industrial

relations, mass media preferences, life-style indicators, transitional studies, environmental studies, and attitudes towards the EU. CJMMK has extensive experience in quantitative survey methodology (cross-sectional, cross-national, face-to-face, and telephone surveys), including opinion leader surveys. In addition, the Centre has also investigated methodological problems, such as sampling, measurement, and semantics.

## Report

After the kick off meeting on 30 March 2010 approximately 400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The regional offices ZSSS that have the direct day to day contact with trade unions and workers representative at the level of employer were asked to convey the questionnaires to work councils or any other form of workers OSH representatives both in private and public sector. Some questionnaires were sent via e-networks for workers representatives (to participants of ZSSS OSH trainings).

It turned out that the questionnaire was off putting for many respondents as they found it difficult and long. The regional offices ZSSS reported that workers OSH representatives complained over the length and complexity of the questionnaire. This may be the reason for relatively small number of filled in questionnaires. It took them in average 60 minutes to fill it in.

The questionnaire was also evaluated as complex to analyze by the contracted FDV researchers too. They talked in advance about their experience with relatively small percentage of filled in questionnaire in general. It seems that people are tired of responding to ever more frequent offers to take part in different surveys. The researchers, therefore, advise short and not too complex questionnaires. They predicted small number of filled in questionnaires. However, ZSSS felt that it is important to keep Slovenian questionnaire as close to the HESA original as possible to make international comparisons possible. We also hoped that the accompanying message (see above) would explain the importance of taking part in practically first survey of Slovenian workers representatives.

**Expectations before the survey:** Before the launching of survey we expected mostly answers from members of work councils in private sector. That is from large and medium enterprises. We also expected some answers from workers OSH representatives from large employers in public sector. We know that there are professional members of work councils (large employers) and we hoped to get very detailed answers on methods of their work. We were very interested on the resources at their disposal, the strategies they set to achieve their goals etc. However, we also knew that work councils have powers wider than just OSH field and we were interested on how much of their attention is directed on OSH.

The return of the filled in questionnaire was slow. Some arrived so late that they could not be analysed. Only 54 were, therefore, analysed by FDV researchers. The number was too low to allow computation of correlations.

Number of questionnaires by regional offices ZSSS:

Regional office ZSSS (OO ZSSS)	Number of distributed questionnaires	Number of returned filled in questionnaires
Dolenjska in Bela krajina ter Posavje	40	10
Spodnje Podravje	20	12
Velenje	20	1
Gorenjske	30	18
Celje	30	
Primorska in Notranjska	30	
Osrednjeslovenska	50	12
Podravje in Koroška	50	6
Pomurje	30	
Sum	300	59

However, the survey offers a wealth of information on the state of affairs. The summary of the analysis of the filled in questionnaires is in Annex 7 Summary of the Survey of workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work.

The answers in the summary are of enormous interest to ZSSS. They show the diversity of ways Slovenian legislation on workers OSH participation has been implemented at the level of individual employer. By far the most common form of workers OSH representatives in Slovenia are work councils. They, however, have powers to participate in management not just on the field of OSH but wage policy, working relations etc. OSH is just one of their priorities. However, some workers representatives in SMEs took part in the survey too.

It is obvious that work councils and workers OSH representatives are very much involved in consultation with management on OSH and that employees do tend to turn to them when they want to make their interest for safe and healthy work known. It turns out, therefore, that labour inspectorate doesn't report accurately on this. For example the survey shows that workers in case of imminent danger often turn for help to them.

How much workers participation is just formality or not depends on people involved: the style of management and workers representatives in each individual enterprise or employer.

It is obvious that the work councils keep constant fight with the management for funding the expense. They are sick having to beg all the time for any activity. Legislation is not enough. Everything must be negotiated from the scratch.

The survey is indication on different level of OSH organisation considering internal and external preventive OSH services. External (both safety engineers and OSH medical practitioners) are less likely involved in the workers participation. However, workers representatives are rarely consulted on adequate organisation of the preventive services.

Trade unions seem to be the driving force of work council elections. However, marked differences can be noted. Even though that we know that in most enterprises several trade unions operate side by side very few seem to take part in workers representatives election process. We are glad to find that ZSSS is by far the most prominent trade union in this respect.

Trade unions seem to be the most important source of guidelines for the operation of workers representatives. On the other hand trade unions have not been presented as the most important provider of specific training for workers representatives. It is clear that ZSSS versatile offer of customised OSH training has not been well presented to target public. Members of work council seem eager to take part in any kind of training that enhances their role.

It is also obvious that there is need for means to exchange experiences and seek peer advice. Not just training but networking too of OSH representatives within branch trade unions is in order. This could be supported by information technology as vast majority of workers representatives has access to internet.

Workers representatives are obviously not OSH experts and need training both on the OSH system and on the role of workers representatives. It seems that the survey questionnaire was a source of inspiration for many of them and sort of a check list on what could be their proper role.

We are not surprised that the survey shows growing awareness of psychosocial strain as an OSH problem. Growing work intensity past endurable level, harassment at work, stress and insecurity due to global economic crises were mentioned most frequently. Workers representatives often find themselves in the role of mediator. They need advice and guidelines to tackle this role.

Written by : Lučka Böhmová, executive secretary P ZSSS

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Annex 1: Promotion brochure ZSSS

Annex 2: Information on HESA and ETUI

Annex 3: Health and Safety at Work Act (ZVZD)

Annex 4: Framework directive on introduction of measures to encourage improvements in safety and health of workers at work (89/391/EEC)

Annex 5: Minutes of the Kick-off workshop for the survey on workers health and safety representatives with participation of the leading ZSSS branch trade unions health and safety specialists on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 with attendance list

Annex 6: Questionnaire Survey of workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work, ZSSS, April – May 2010 (SLO translated into EN)

Annex 7 Summary of the Survey of workers' representative with specific responsibility for the health and safety at work