

14th Annual Meeting of the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety

2 October 2008, Hotel Artis, Vilnius, Lithuania

Report of the BSN Annual Meeting 2008 (Final version on 19 December 2008)

notes by Taina Pääkkönen, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, and representatives of the member countries

Brief summary of the report:

- Member countries agreed to continue to look for funding sources to carry out projects together in the BSN region
- The members agreed to update existing country profiles (see at <http://www.ndphs.org/?database,view,paper,22>), and to make new profiles. If needed, consultation on profile making will be provided by Dr. Timo Leino, FIOH (timo.leino (at) ttl.fi)
- Members were encouraged to send information on their activities to the Barents Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety (proposals to suvi.lehtinen (at) ttl.fi)
- Possibilities to improve knowledge transfer within the BSN countries and between various organizations within countries and between countries were discussed. Also, tools to improve the co-operation of health and labour fields were discussed.
- The member countries agreed to regularly update their country pages at www.balticseaosh.net. Also it was agreed to look into the possibilities to further improve the contents and technical solutions of the BSN main webpages (discussion forum, etc.). Proposals on activities and links to be published at the main pages were invited to be send to the BSN Secretariat (bsn (at) ttl.fi).
- BSN Annual Meeting 2009 was invited to Latvia (host: Professor Maija Eglite). The date will be confirmed later (BSN 2009 Annual Meeting will be arranged on 8 October 2009).

I Opening of the Meeting

Chair: Remigijus Jankauskas, Institute of Hygiene, Lithuania

Opening of the meeting and words of welcome were given by Dr. Remigijus Jankauskas. Professor Harri Vainio welcomed the participants on behalf of the FIOH and BSN Secretariat.

II Country reports (report text provided by the country representatives)

Finland (see power point slides attached)

Professor Harri Vainio, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

On national level three government development programmes are on-going, and FIOH participates in all of them. FIOH also collaborated actively with the EU Chemical Agency in Helsinki. The development of occupational health services (OHS) – content and quality of the services under development is on-going. Finnish Government has launched a productivity programme to cut personnel resources by 2013. Merger of National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) and National Public Health Institute (KTL); 2008 is planning period for the merger and the new organisation will have over 14 000 employees. FIOH and STUK (Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority) were allowed to continue as they were. FIOH Services grouped into product lines and product families. Upcoming meetings and ongoing international projects: NanOEH2009 and NAM meetings in August-September 2009 in Helsinki. International collaboration project, among others, in Northwest Russia and in East Africa.

Latvia (see full text attached at the end of this report)

Dr. Ivars Vanadzins, Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health

During the fall 2007 and year 2008 the Latvian system of occupational health and safety has been very busy:

- Latvian have made a major effort to finalize the National strategy on occupational health and safety 2008–2013 as well as to prepare implementation program for 2007–2010;

- Latvians have started to reorganize the legal system (modify several legal documents, including the Occupational Health and Safety Law) based on conclusions of the new survey on “Working conditions and risks in Latvia”.

Sweden (see full text attached at the end of this report)

Ms. Birgitta Melin, Swedish Work Environment Authority

According to a Government decision in 2006, the Authority has to decrease its staff with 30%, from 764 in 2006 to 540 in 2009. However, recently the Government has decided to increase the funding of some specific activities, e.g. information, standardization and market surveillance. The Authority's current topics of interest and activities are, for example: ergonomics in assembling, violence and threat in public transport, engineering industry, health care, and checkouts.

Denmark (see full text attached at the end of this report)

Mr. Steffen Hyldborg Jensen, National Research Centre for the Working Environment

The NRCWE is currently engaged in providing evidence based knowledge and helping formulate policies on sickness absence and return to work as part of an ambitious agreement between the government and the social partners to reduce sickness absence. An international evaluation panel has just submitted their report on the quality and relevance of the NRCWE research. The conclusions are in general very positive. This evaluation will form the basis for a government decision on how large a share of NRCWE's basic funding must be subject to competition. As chairman of PEROSH, the Director General of the NRCWE has in 2008 led a development process of PEROSH with decisions on establishment of a secretariat in Brussels, pooling of resources in common cross-country research projects and formal cooperation with EU-agencies.

Germany (see full text attached at the end of this report)

Mr. Simon Kaluza, Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA)

Ms. Isabel Rothe was appointed as director in November 2007. She launched a strategic enhancement of the BAuA, aiming to identify and develop new strategy focal points. Operational level processes, such as research, development, transfer, the DASA (German Occupational Safety and Health Exhibition), and other tasks, were also evaluated. An organisational macro-structure already exists, but the new organisational structure will come into effect in January 2009. Meanwhile, work with projects and international networks continue as usual: BAuA participates and contributes to the Topic Centres "Risk Observatory", "Work Environment", "OSH" of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (2009 onwards), PEROSH (Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health), NEW OSH ERA, and WHO collaborating centre. Furthermore, BAuA has several projects within the 6th and 7th Framework Programme and PROGRESS (e.g. Chronic RAD EPID, PROMENPOL, PRIMA-EF, DETERMINE, HEALTH CARE, and MegaCities). BAuA's international cooperation actions are expected to expand in the future.

Norway

Mr. Sture Bye, National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH)

Dr. Axel Wannag, Directorate of Labour Inspection

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion is strengthening the sector of occupational medicine with a funding on 20 mnok (approx 2.415.000,- Euro) and 2.5 mnok (approx 300.000 Euro) directly to NIOH. There is a hearing on the occupational health services over expanding the mandatory OHS, and whether there should be a system for officially approving OHS service providers. NIOH is suggested as an approval authority, and if the expansion is decided, approximately 600.000 new workers will be covered by mandatory OHS (approx. total of 1.1-1.3 million workers covered). The Research Council of Norway has a new research programme on sick leave that covers subjects such as health, socioeconomic status and risk-groups, health-related welfare services, workplace, environment and occupational health, sick leave and social exclusion as social and individual processes. Also, the Ministry has a special focus on chemical hazard offshore. In relation to this, the Petroleum Safety Authority in collaboration with NIOH has proposed to regulate (instruct) the publication of the exposure measurements within EXPO. EXPO will be converted to a National Database on Chemical Exposure, currently it is NIOH's database on chemical exposure. The Norwegian Parliament is united in its support to NIOH, and the organisations in the field of occupational health in general, and particularly, on the work on chemical work environment. Also, NIOH is applying to become a WHO Collaborating Center within the Network of Occupational Health. On research news: NOA (National Surveillance of the Work Environment) at NIOH has presented their latest reports on the Work Life in Norway; Survey on Working Conditions (level of living survey). The survey is performed every three

year. There are 10 000 participants/interview objects and we can now, for the first time, identify conditions related to occupations and not just branches.

Estonia

Ms. Irma Nool, Tervishoiuamet, Health Care Board

Lithuania (see power point slides attached)

Dr. Saulius Vainauskas, Occupational Medicine Centre, Institute of Hygiene

(Dr. Vainauskas is the new Head of the Occupational Medicine Centre. Dr. Jankauskas is currently the Director of the Institute of Hygiene.)

During 1995–2007 the number of the registered occupational diseases increased from 370 to 1123 cases. Also the numbers of both heavy and fatal accidents at work have increased. New cases of occupational diseases have regionally been registered rather notably disproportionately. The main problems on OHS are insufficient number of OHS services, shortage of occupational health specialists, inefficiency of periodical health examinations and under-diagnosing of occupational diseases. The main directions for future plans are coordination of occupational health activities, creation of OSH services network, strengthening of OSH services and development of human resources.

Summary of the discussion on situations in the member countries:

- Many of the member organisations have or are about to face personnel and/or funding cut downs. Also merging and closing down of research institutes have occurred in the region during the past few years. These changes pose a challenge to carrying out occupational health and safety research, and also for providing the decision makers with accurate and high quality information on the oh&s situation in the member countries and the region.
- How to harmonize the international actions on occupational health and strategy? More importantly, how to bring the various international strategies to the national level? International strategies and guidelines can be used to strengthen the position of occupational health and safety organisation.
- How to make the stakeholders in occupational health and safety to work together? How to best work together with other organisations in the field and avoid duplication of work? Profiling and stakeholder meetings as a method to bring attention to the advances of working together and pooling resources. Also, proposed was that primary health care practitioners would be educated on occupational diseases, raise their awareness of occupational risks and diseases, improve the detection of occupational diseases.

III Activities in 2009

Chair: Harri Vainio, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Introduction

Professor Harri Vainio, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Great disparities still remain within the region, but the countries also have similar problems. We need to work together to solve problems, particularly as the work force moves across the borders. How to prevent social dumping (example from Norway)? Services are also moving across the borders, how to guarantee the quality of the services? Do we need a system for quality control, a certificate system, to guarantee a minimum level of expertise on occupational health and safety matters?

ILO and NDPHS/SIHLWA cooperation in OSH in the Northern Dimension Region

Mr. Wiking Husberg, ILO Moscow office (see attached power point slides)

BSN aims with the NDPHS/SIHLWA cooperation to bring the occupational health and safety issues to the notice of the politicians and decision makers. The NDPHS/SIHLWA group produced the "Health at Work Strategy" in November 2007 (see at www.ndphs.org). The strategy is based on ILO, WHO, and EU OSH strategies. It is important that the different actors – networks and organisations on occupational safety and health – in the region share their knowledge and distribute information. For example, NDPHS has published an occupational safety and health fact sheet for the region (available in the network webpages).

Mr. Husberg brought the latest news on NDPHS and SIHLWA activities from the meeting arranged in Oslo on 30 Sept–1 Oct 2008. The NDPHS Secretariat has sent a letter to each member country, to the health ministries, to inquire how the countries have implemented the "Health at Work Strategy". By the Oslo meeting replies were received from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. NDPHS aims to improve co-operation of public and occupational health. The NDPHS is lobbying to have the "Health at Work Strategy" included in the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Next SIHLWA meeting will be on 19-20 March 2009 in Öresund, Sweden.

EU OSHA activities 2009 in brief (see www.osha.europa.eu)

Mr. Tim Tregenza, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Mr. Tregenza replaces Ms. Sabine Sommer as the network manager in Bilbao Agency. He has worked with the Bilbao Agency for 8 years in several projects. Gallileo cuts also influence the Agency: 10% cut across the EU agencies. Priority to building links to external networks. Director of the Agency, Dr. Jukka Takala strongly stresses constructive approach. The Agency is launching a new campaign of risk assessment (2008–2009), which aims at identifying and diminishing risks. Free information material is available online. Enterprise survey across the Europe; particularly psychosocial risks (telephone, written surveys): at pilot phase, preliminary results at the end of 2009. TNO is performing the survey for the Agency. The Agency has ongoing projects in road transport, violence, carcinogens, psychosocial, cleaning workers, etc. More information is available online at www.osha.europa.eu and from Mr. Tregenza.

Summary of discussion on the activities and BSN work plan:

- NDPHS pipeline for project funding: Finland and Norway have provided funding for North-West Russian Region. Sweden has also provided funding through the pipeline (see at www.ndphs.org) that might also be available to use in other countries in the NDPHS Region.
- BSN-NDPHS/SIHLWA collaboration: BSN comprises of occupational health and safety institutes, it is a network of experts representing institutes. NDPHS is a network of governments, mostly representing the ministries of health. It is hoped that in the future the NDPHS-collaboration would also include the ministries of labour.
- A competition between the ministries of health and ministries of labour was identified in most of the BSN countries. It was discussed that BSN has a role in the middle field between the ministries to try make the ministries work together on occupational health and safety matters. Can we find concrete methods/tools to improve the cooperation between these two fields (health and labour)?
- NDPHS pipeline funding is mainly aimed for North West Russia, are there activities/ funding for other areas in the region? Does all activities need external funding, could some of the tasks be carried out without external funding, with own resources?

IV BSN work plan 2009

Ongoing projects and activities within the BSN network, brief introductions

Country profiles

Dr. Timo Leino, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Dr. Leino has coordinated the compiling of the country reports: 6 were made in early 2008, and are available at <http://www.ndphs.org/?database,view,paper,22>. The process of making the profile is more important than producing detailed statistics. Dr. Leino urged the countries to consider the profiles a tool to communicate with the social partners, set up a meeting to discuss the compiling of the profile. Profiles are a starting point for making action programmes and to start implementing the national plans.

Indicators

Kari Kurppa, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Dr. Kurppa spoke for the importance and value of qualitative indicators. Numbers seem convincing, but can at times be quite wrong (for example, under reporting of work injuries) and might not present an accurate picture of the situation. During the Twinning asbestos project in Estonia in 2007–2008 also an indicator system was developed, as in many other countries, there weren't many reliable quantitative indicators. Even if evaluation of a trend is based on figures that are fairly accurate, it reflexes the situation in past and is not an indicator for taking preventive actions. To take note of the prevalent situation and plan actions based on that we need to make obvious to the attention of the decision makers.

FIOH collaboration in North-West Russia with WHO and ILO; project

Ms. Suvi Lehtinen, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (see power point slides attached)

The project idea is based on the NDPHS's "Health at Work Strategy". The implementation plan consists of:

i) Preparation of national OSH profiles (Responsibility at FIOH: Timo Leino), ii) Preparation of the National OSH programme (Responsibility at FIOH: Timo Leino), iii) providing BOHS (Responsibility at FIOH: Suvi Lehtinen, ICOH/Jorma Rantanen), iv) Improving health and preventing accidents in high-risk sectors (Responsibility at FIOH: Kari Kurppa, Seppo Olkkonen), v) Advocacy, awareness raising, adding to the knowledge (Responsibility at FIOH: Suvi Lehtinen). The project aims to help the Russian experts to further improve their occupational health and safety strategy and planning, but the actual development work will exceed the project period. The project will also include road transport safety and health part in St. Petersburg area, which aims to develop a sectoral profile on road transport. This activity (iv) is led by Dr. Kari Kurppa and Dr. Seppo Olkkonen, and it is a research and development activity (not academic) aimed to help improve occupational health and safety at the transport sector in Russia. The project was planned originally as a 2-year project, but received funding from the Finnish Foreign Ministry at the first phase only for the first year. Additional funds have been applied for 2009 activities. Ms. Lehtinen encouraged others to collaborate with the project and apply funds for similar projects in other corners of the sub-region.

New BSN web page layout and technical base

Ms. Taina Pääkkönen, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

The new BSN layout was published in the beginning of 2008. The domain name was transferred from US to a Finnish server (Louhi), and a new simple web publishing programme introduced. Most of the members have updated the material in their pages, but continues updating is called for. Each country has their own administrative user names and pass codes. If needed, the BSN Secretariat (bsn (at) tti.fi) can provide new passwords. Also, proposals for updates on the main pages, such as new links or activities, are most welcome.

Ideas on developing the BSN webpages

Mr. Aleksej Romanov, Occupational Medicine Centre, Institute of Hygiene

Mr. Romanov proposed that a discussion forum would be established on the webpages. Also, he suggested that information on the projects, past and on-going, would be gathered to a BSN project database or some sort of expert knowledge database would be established on the webpages. Mr. Romanov further proposed that the possibilities of the BSN web pages as a tool for distributing training material would be considered, at least to publish training programmes and perhaps also as a venue for carrying out web seminars.

Summary of discussion on BSN activities in general and the BSN work plan 2009:

General:

- Indicators' development were discussed: According to German experience it is difficult to find statistical indicators particularly for labour inspection. Dr. Kurppa noted that SLIC group has developed a manual which includes steps for indicator development. Also, Dr. Kurppa reminded that indicators are not necessary numbers, but word descriptions of the situation
- Occupational health is not only an individual question, it includes also a population level consideration: a) individual level; diseases, health care actions, b) population level: preventing, basis of workers health activities.
- BSN meeting participants share a common interest: occupational health and safety issues. BSN offers tools to exchange information.
- How to strengthen the network? Bring more participants from Sweden and Denmark to the meeting? It was discussed that the Network would be less vulnerable and more viable if more representatives from each country participated in the BSN Annual Meetings.
- Dr. Claudio Colosio has prepared a project plan for occupational health and safety in agriculture; the Baltic countries have participated in the application, for example Latvia.
- Exchange of research within the network was discussed: Should we invite research directors of each institute to participate in a special BSN meeting on research questions? BSN co-operation has previously emphasized development, implementation and interventions. Could BSN use NIVA to set up a conference on knowledge transfer within the Baltic Sea countries?

Funding possibilities:

- Funding possibilities; NDPHS pipeline funds are available for all organizations (also non-BSN members). The participants agreed to keep each other informed on what sort of projects are planned, and if there are new funding opportunities.

- Mr. Husberg informed the meeting on alternative funding opportunities for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania at Central Baltic Interreg IV A programme 2007–2013 (priority 2. Economically competitive and innovative region). See and/or contact: www.centralbaltic.eu; info@centralbaltic.eu, Ms. Linda Talvitie, +358 2 2100 975, linda.talvitie@centralbaltic.eu

Actions agreed to be taken:

- The member countries present agreed each to commit to regularly updating the country pages at www.balticseaosh.net.
- The meeting agreed that BSN secretariat resources will be provided during 2008–2009 by FIOH in Helsinki. Professor Vainio noted that unfortunately FIOH cannot provide general funding for BSN activities.
- Mr. Bye proposed to make preliminary inquiries to find out if it is possible to arrange a meeting for the research directors in connection with a Norwegian national knowledge transfer meeting planned.
- Updating existing profiles to provide information nationally and internationally. Dr. Leino will send an e-mail specifying the need to upgrade the existing profiles and to request those countries that have not made their profiles yet to do so. Recommendable is to have a roundtable discussions on country level, to involve social partners.
- Next BSN annual meetings: Sweden was proposed, but they have the Presidency of the European Council in 2009, instead Sweden was proposed for 2010. Professor Maija Eglite and Dr. Ivars Vanadzins invited the BSN Annual Meeting to Latvia in 2009. Dr. Vanadzins will inform the preliminary date by 10 October 2008.

Summary of the meeting by Professor Harri Vainio, chair of the session:

- Topics of interest for the annual meeting 2008 were research and development, as well as policy and infrastructure developments and implementation of strategies. BSN has a practical objective; to increase knowledge and co-operation for making further improvements.
- Good and practical tools to proceed with improvements on country level: a) Country profiles, b) National programmes/ action programmes, strategies, c) implementing the programmes, d) improving the infrastructure
- The BSN activities have progressed from the 2007 meeting in Bonn: road transport project is being implemented through the project in North-West Russia, by implementing a pilot and providing a practical example.
- Technical solutions of the BSN webpages were challenged by Alekseij Romanov (Lithuania)
- New funding possibilities were discussed.
- A need to facilitate knowledge transfer on national and regional levels was identified.

V Forum statement

Chair: Remigijus Jankauskas, Occupational Medicine Centre, Institute of Hygiene

Dr. Jankauskas briefly presented the statement draft distributed to the participants prior the BSN Annual Meeting. He explained that the statement is intended to be further discussed and adopted in the Forum meeting of Friday, 3 October. Mr. Jankauskas invited the BSN members to comment on the statement draft, what should be prioritized and how to shorten the text, and he will then pass the comments to the Friday meeting. Dr. Jankauskas told that the Lithuanian Ministry of Health has instructed that the statement should be summarized to one page.

Summary of the discussion on the statement draft:

- The definition of the occupational health in the statement draft was discussed. It was proposed that the wording would be modified to define that occupational health is an independent part of public health (ref. EU definition of occupational health, ref. WHO 2007 resolution).
- The participants agreed that the statement should be shortened in order for it to be more appealing to the politicians and decision makers in Lithuania.

Dr. Jankauskas gave thanks to the participants for an excellent meeting, and closed the meeting at 16.00.

ATTACHMENTS: Country reports

BSN Annual Meeting, Vilnius, October 2-3, 2008

Country situation – LATVIA

Fall of year 2007 and year 2008 in Latvian system of occupational health and safety has been very busy as there have been:

- major efforts to finish the National strategy on occupational health and safety 2008-2013 as well as to prepare implementation program for 2007-2010;
- work started on reorganization of legal system (change of many legal documents, including the Occupational Health and Safety Law) based on conclusions from survey “Working conditions and risks in Latvia”

Major events in 2007/2008

- Phare Transition Facility project “Latvian Occupational health and safety system (further development) has been finished with recommendations for further steps
- survey “Working conditions and risks in Latvia” finished.
- Institute of Occupational and Environmental health has been reorganized into agency “Institute of Occupational safety and environmental health”
- many principal changes in legislation of occupational health and safety (mostly simplification of administrative requirements and some additional requirements added based on survey results as well as institutional changes required according to recommendations from Phare Transition facility project)
- National strategy on occupational health and safety 2008-2013 accepted in March 2008
- Development program on occupational health and safety 2007-2010 elaborated and submitted to government (actual implementation of the program already started in summer 2007)
- Handbook “Environmental Medicine” finished and submitted for printing
- European Social Fund projects opening up: namely for State Labour inspection, Latvian Employers confederation and also for development of research capacity

Publication “Working conditions and risks in Latvia” is available in English under following link:

<http://www.darbatirgus.gov.lv/?id=222&top=33&sa=94>

Sweden, Birgitta Melin

The Swedish National Institute for Working Life was shut down on 1 July 2007. Some research on occupational safety and health was moved to universities in several parts of the country. The secretariat of the Nordic Expert Group for Criteria Documentation of Health Risks from Chemicals (NEG) and for the Swedish Criteria Group is now situated within the Swedish Work Environment Authority. Funds for training of staff of occupational health and safety services have been secured. The publication *Arbete och Hälsa* is now published by the University of Gothenburg.

According to a decision by the Government in 2006, the Swedish Work Environment Authority has to decrease its staff with 30 %, from 764 in 2006 to 540 in 2009. The Government demanded us to keep as much as possible of inspection capacity, which meant that we have to diminish the central staff more than the labour inspectorate. The department for Regulation and expert support has to decrease its staff with 47 %. The number of staff has been diminished by forced and voluntary reduction. The risks for the staff as a result of the reorganization have been assessed.

The remaining staff has to change its work routines, e.g. by introduction of an answering service.

Recently the Government has decided to increase the funding of some specific activities, e.g. information, standardization and market surveillance.

Example of our activities just now:

- ergonomics in assembling
- violence and threat in public transport
- engineering industry
- health care
- checkouts

During 2008 we have just finished a "Goal and vision" – project, which will be the basis for the activities during the next years. Important activities will be to:

- find a method to measure the benefits of activities of occupational safety and health,
- improve the regulations
- emphasize market surveillance
- increase the productivity of inspection (increase of field activities)
- improve our communication with the workplaces
- supervise with emphasis on construction and agriculture

BSN Conference in Vilnius 2 October 2008

Summary of situation report - NRCWE

National Research
Centre for the
Working
Environment
Lersø Parkallé 105
DK-2100
Copenhagen
Denmark

The NRCWE is currently engaged in providing evidence based knowledge and helping formulate policies about sickness absence and return to work as part of an ambitious agreement between the government and the social partners to reduce sickness absence.

An international evaluation panel has just submitted their report on the NRCWE. The evaluation is primarily an assessment of the quality and relevance of the research of the NRCWE. The conclusions in the report are in general very positive for the NRCWE. The evaluation will form the basis for a government decision on how large a share of NRCWE's basic funding must be subject to competition.

As chairman of PEROSH the Director General of the NRCWE has in 2008 led a development process of PEROSH with decisions on establishment of a secretariat in Bruxelles, pooling of resources in common cross-country research projects and formal cooperation with EU-agencies.

Baltic Sea Network 2008 – report BAuA

Isabel Rothe took over the BAuA management in November 2007 and launched the strategic enhancements of the BAuA. First of all, an analysis of tasks and problems was carried out. The results were taken for the development of the prospective strategic focal points. On operational level, processes regarding research, development, transfer, sovereign tasks and the DASA (German Occupational Safety and Health Exhibition) were discussed. Currently an organisational macro-structure exists. In January 2009, the new BAuA organisational chart will come into operation.

Besides that reorganisation, BAuA is involved in different projects and networks on international level:

- Topic Centre Risk Observatory, Topic Centre Work Environment (European Agency for Safety & Health at Work)
- Topic Centre OSH of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (2009 onwards)
- Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety & Health (PEROSH)
- NEW OSH ERA
- WHO collaborating centre.

Furthermore, colleagues launched several projects within the frame of the 6th and 7th Framework Programme and PROGRESS:

- Chronic RAD EPID
- PROMENPOL
- PRIMA-EF
- DETERMINE
- HEALTH CARE
- MegaCities.

All in all, the international cooperation should be expanded in future. Therefore, BAuA will be further engaged in international projects.

Country Report NIOH, Norway

01.10.08

Sture Bye, Communications Director

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion in Norway is strengthening the sector of Occupational Medicine in Norway with a funding on 20 mnok (approx 2.415.000,- Euro) and 2.5 mnok (approx 300.000 Euro) directly to NIOH.

There is a hearing on the Norwegian Occupational Health Services. The hearing is on an expansion of the branches with mandatory OHS and whether the OHS sector in Norway is to go through an official approval. NIOH is suggested as an approval authority, and if the expansion is decided we will have approximately 600.000 new workers covered by mandatory OHS (a total of 1.1-1.3 million workers will then be covered. The number is not yet set due to the fact that quite few of these do have OHS already).

The Research Council of Norway has established a new research programme on sick leave. The main topics within the programme are: Health, socioeconomic status and risk-groups, Health-related welfare services, Workplace, environment and occupational health, Sick leave and social exclusion as social and individual processes.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion in Norway has a special focus on chemical hazard offshore. In relation to this The Petroleum Safety Authority in collaboration with NIOH put forward a proposal to regulate (instruct) the publication of the exposure measurements within EXPO and that EXPO then will become a National Database on Chemical Exposure. (EXPO is NIOHs database on chemical exposure). The Norwegian Parliament across the established party lines gave their honour and full trust to NIOH and the institutions work on Occupational Health in general and on the work on chemical work environment particularly.

NIOH has got an stabil situation.

NIOH Norway is applying to become a WHO Collaborating Center within the Network of Occupational Health. Our interest has been well received by the WHO and the designation form will be WHO in hand late October this year.

NOA (National National surveillance of the work environment) at NIOH has presented their latest reports on the Work Life in Norway; Survey on Working Conditions (level of living survey). The survey is performed every three year. There are 10 000 participants/interview objects and we can now, for the first time, identify conditions related to occupations and not just branches.