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Joint UNECE-Eurostat-ILO Seminar
on Measurement of the Quality of Employment
(Geneva, 27-29 May 2002)

Harmonised measurement of occupational health and safety in the EU

Invited paper submitted by Eurostat¹

Summary

1. In the framework of the Commission Communication COM (2002) 118 final of 11.03.2002 « Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002–2006 », the European Commission (Eurostat and DG Employment and social affairs), together with the Member States, will continue to improve the existing harmonised tools for the measurement of the occupational health and safety situation and evolution in the EU. For administrative sources on the outcomes of non-quality in working conditions, mainly ESAW on accidents and EODS on diseases², better coverage (all branches of activity and employment statuses), exhaustivity (eliminating under-declaration) and timeliness should be achieved. For survey sources, mainly ad hoc modules in the Labour Force Survey³ and the European survey on working conditions⁴, sufficient periodicity (at least every 4 or 5 years) and sample size (working conditions' survey), better reliability (for answers by proxies) and comparability (better convergence to same concepts in all LFS national questionnaires) should also be achieved.

2. On the basis of these improved sources and in the framework of Commission Communications COM (2001) 313 final of 20.06.2001 on « Employment and social policies : a framework for investing in quality » and COM(2001) 619 final of 30.10.2001 on « Structural indicators », Quality of Work indicators on health and safety at work should be consolidated, including aspects on the cost of non-quality, to assess of how successful Member States and EU policies are at reaching goals in this field. Two key indicators on accidents at work, that are, the evolution (index 1994 = 100) of the incidence rate, defined as the number of accidents at work per 100.000 persons in employment, for both “serious” and fatal accidents, have been already drawn up. To answer the request of the Indicators Group of the Employment Committee (EMCO), which report was approved by the Employment and Social Policy Council (06.12.2001), for a “*composite indicator which measures accidents at work and occupational diseases, including as a result of stress*”, an indicator based on the number of days lost they involve (days absence from work, which is also a proxy variable on costs) can be proposed. Data on days lost are collected in all EU sources above (accidents at work, occupational diseases, other work-related health problems).

1 Paper written by Didier Dupré.

2 ESAW : European statistics on accidents at work; EODS : European occupational diseases statistics.

3 Ad hoc module in the 1999 European Union LFS on accidents at work and work-related health problems.

4 Carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.