Meeting minutes

The 1-st meeting of the Technical Group of Occupational Safety and Health (TG OSH) of the NDPHS. Vilnius, Lithuania, 22-23 March 2011.

List of participants

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ms. Kadri Langen</td>
<td>Chief specialist in Labour dev dep’t</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Affairs</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Ms Liisa Pert</td>
<td>Main specialist</td>
<td>Health Board</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Dr. Seppo Olkkonen</td>
<td>Senior specialist</td>
<td>FIOH</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Ms Suvi Lehtinen</td>
<td>Chief, International Affairs</td>
<td>FIOH</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Dr Kari Kurppa</td>
<td>Leading expert</td>
<td>FIOH</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ms. Raimonda Eicinaite-Lingiene</td>
<td>Main specialist</td>
<td>Hygiene Institute</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Dr Remigijus Jankauskas</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Hygiene Institute</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mr Viktoras Mežis</td>
<td>Head of EU and Int’l Affairs</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Dr Rokho KIM</td>
<td>Occupational Health Programme Manager</td>
<td>WHO/Europe</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mr Sture Bye</td>
<td>Communications Director</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Dr Trygve Eklund</td>
<td>Director General</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Mr Wiking Husberg</td>
<td>Senior OSH Specialist</td>
<td>ILO/Moscow</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Prof. Marat Rudakov</td>
<td>Project coordinator</td>
<td>ILO/Moscow</td>
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1. Introduction of participants. A glance at the meeting agenda. The TG OSH Lead Partner ILO suggested W Husberg to be elected as Chair and Co-Lead Partner Lithuania suggested R Jankauskas to be elected Co-Chair. TG OSH agreed to both proposals.

2. Mr. Husberg (ILO) briefed the meeting about SIHLWA history (2005-2009), TG OSH tasks, and cooperation with the BSN and the NDPHS, ‘Health at work’ strategy (2007), and activities to take in 2011.

   Discussion: Ms. Lehtinen informed participants that Latvia might be the host of the next BSN annual meeting in 2011 (October). Mr. Husberg announced the suggestion that the next meeting of TG OSH might be organized either in Moscow or Arkhangel’sk (Russia).

3. Ms. Pert (Estonia) made the presentation titled ‘OHS situation in Estonia’ (issues: structure of OSH management in Estonia; data on occ. accidents and diseases; the number of physicians including those in the OH sphere; activities/future plans of the Health Bureau - researches, reporting systems, etc; general future plans - standards, inspection, web-sites, working life survey etc).
4. Mr. Jankauskas (Lithuania) told TG OSH about:
- restructuring of the Institute of Hygiene of Lithuania;
- on-going actions in line with the NDPHS strategy (the OHS profile would be finished in mid 2011, OHS Action plan for 2008-2012 was adopted by the Government, special box of actions for the OHS development was being put into practice);
- the structure of the OHS management system in Lithuania (Min. Health, Min. Soc.Sec.and Labour);
- the Government programme ‘On the safe elimination of asbestos for 2008-2013’;
- ‘HIRES-Plus’ project (3 parties of Soc. Dialogue were covered);
- A national conference on Progress in Public and Occ. Health would be organized annually from 2012;
- The information network in the field of OSH, the site www.dmc.lt, joint information campaigns with the support of the EU agency for OSH.

**Action:** Based on the suggestion of Lithuania the TG OSH decided to start a comparative analysis of the practical set-up of occupational health services/professionals. Lithuania will make a draft Terms of reference to be reviewed by the core group (LITH: RJ, REL; FIN: SL, KK; EST: KL) and questionnaire (with a model reply) disseminated to the member countries. The result (a thematic report) need to be practical and concrete. The deadlines were defined to be the following: primary results – by June 2011 (OSH Forum) and final results – by October 2011 (BSN Annual Meeting). Ms. Husberg agreed to attempt to find possibility to finance this job through the NDPHS secretariat.

5. Mr. Eklund and Mr. Bye (Norway) described the on-going progress of OH development in Norway in line with the NDPHS strategy.

6. Ms. Lehtinen (FIOH/Finland) made a presentation on the Finnish policy in the development of OH and on the FIOH NW Russia project. The main key-stones of her report were the following:
- the national OHS policy of Finland was close to the NDPHS strategy (the profile, the programme, etc);
- compilation a country profile of workers’ health was the subject of discussion;
- the main directions of FIOH’s activities were defined to be: ‘Development solutions’, ‘Client-oriented services’, ‘Impact through informing’.

7. Mr. Marat Rudakov (ILO) presented the main achievements of the ILO OSH project in NW Russia. This project gained the NDPHS label in 2011.

**Discussion:** Mr. Kim (WHO) suggested that the project should determine more measurable performances. Mr. Bye (Norway) raised a question concerning a study (or survey) on occupational traumatism in the NW regions of concern. Mr. Husberg stressed that the project was gaining both quantitative and qualitative results (for ex., changing of OSH paradigm in Russia from compensation system towards culture of prevention).

8. Mr. Husberg presented a summary table of country progress (compared with the table as of October 2010). TG OSH decided to organize official requests of the NDPHS secretariat to the representatives of member states to provide TG OSH and WHO/Europe with information in order to update the summary table.
**Action:** TG OSH will circulate the “OSH status table” to the countries that were not present for updating.

**Action:** TG OSH Chair will request the NDPHS Secretariat to send a letter (previous status reports attached) to the member states to update the status report on the implementation of the “Health at Work” strategy. Letter to be copied to TG OSH members and WHO CCs for information.

9. Mr. Kurppa (FIOH) described the concept of indicators for evaluation of OH services. Examples of issues to be monitored with the indicators were given, as well.

**Discussion:** Ms. Eicinaite-Lingiene noticed the evaluation of OH services to have been the matter of interest in Lithuania. The main problem was to implement the evaluation procedures in practice. Mr. Kim replied that practical evaluation had become a problem for the entire Europe. Mr. Kim also suggested performing preliminary evaluation exercise in the Baltic Area, as the pilot area. The pilot results could be used when performing a large-scale project in Europe.

10. Mr. Rokho Kim (WHO/Europe) made the presentation ‘Mainstreaming ‘Health at Work’ strategy into the new European Health Policy of the WHO’. Mr. Kim highlighted the new European Health Policy ‘Health 2020’ and ‘European Action Framework for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services’, and ‘Essential Public Health Operations (EPHOs)’, and ‘European Review of Social Determinants of Health and Health Divide’, and ‘Policy options to Occupational Health for all’. Mr. Kim raised several questions addressed to TG OSH, namely:
   - ‘Can activities of the NDPHS and BSN be integrated into ‘Health 2020’?;
   - ‘Can we merge ‘Health at Work’ strategy into EPHOs ?

11. Mr. Husberg, Ms. Lehtinen, Mr. Kim highlighted possible financial opportunities for project proposals (potential donors: SIDA, EU, Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs). Further, the NDHPS can provide assistance to develop project proposals and thematic reports. Initiatives can be send to the TG OSH Chair.

12. Mr. Husberg initiated a discussion on the project proposal ‘Return to work after sick leaves’. Latvia has prepared a proposal but the members of TG OSH were not informed of the progress (Latvian representatives were absent). This issue was assumed to be a question for the routine interaction within TG OSH in the nearest future.

**Action:** TG OSH requests Latvia to share information on the progress of the project document. Estonia informed that they are interested in such a project.

13. Ms Pert noted that Estonia will have a lack of trained occupational OSH specialists after a few years due to retirements and, secondly, the present occupational health specialists have not received upgrading training in the last years.

**Action:** Estonia will revive the OSH network created earlier in Estonia by inviting them to a training seminar. FIOH and WHO are ready to assist. The event could take the form of a two day seminars (first day a meeting of the OSH network and the second day devoted to upgrading training by foreign experts), which also could discuss the continuation of upgrading training utilising experts from other countries in the NDPHS. The Estonian event could be back-to-back with the BSN Meeting in Latvia in October 2011. Estonia will contact FIOH to start the process.
14. Ms. Eicinaite-Lingiene made a short report on possibility improve the occupational health system in Lithuania and the of ratification of the ILO convention No. 161 by Lithuania. Ms. Eicinaite-Lingiene also informed TG OSH of the activities taken by Lithuania in the fields of Public and Occupational Health and noted that the country has a need of assistance in implementation and ratification of ILO Conv 161.

**Action:** Ms. Eicinaite-Lingiene will define the needs related to the implementation and ratification of ILO Conv 161 on occupational health services in Lithuania. It may include a comparative analysis of the Lithuanian legislation and the ILO Conv 161; information and promotion of the benefits of an effective occupational health system, especially targeted towards the business community (promotion by other Employers’ Organisations) and capacity building for implementation. Lithuania will request assistance from ILO Budapest office (copy TG OSH and EHO/EURO).

15. Mr. Husberg and Mr. Kim informed TG OSH of the prospects of collaboration between ILO and WHO, namely:
- combined (ILO’s and WHO’s) outline for compiling national OSH profile;
- strengthening efforts of ILO/CIS centres and WHO collaborating centres;
- the development and implementation of BOHS.

**Overall discussion** on how to activate the role of OH services by means of good state governance, training, focal points of OHS, etc.

16. Mr. Husberg informed TG OSH of the next Ministerial PAC meeting that would be held in St-Petersburg (Russia) on 25 November 2011. A side event will be held the day before.

17. Conclusions and final remarks.