



Occupational safety and health in Czech Republic

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Part 1: Perception of health and safety at work in Czech Republic

Quantitative research and qualitative research

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A series of empirical inquiries were carried out for the purpose of complex mapping of subjective perception of health and safety problems manifested at work in the Czech Republic. The study was realised within the project Good Neighbour and sponsored by the Health and Safety Executive.

The above mentioned empirical inquiries come out of the realised secondary analysis of relevant sources and, simultaneously, they are supported by the results of the general pilot study of Czech population.

The first phase of empirical inquiry including quantitative survey of Czech population and qualitative in-depth interviews was carried out in selective localities of the Czech Republic in March 2001.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The field of labour protection belongs to frequently discussed questions within the European Union. However, these problems are solved very slowly in the Czech Republic. This fact is also proved in the Report on the Czech Republic for the year 1999 written by the European Committee, which mentions imperfections in the field of working law and safety and health protection at work within the evaluation of the progress of the Czech Republic preparations to enter the European Union.

Indisputably, a number of positive changes has occurred in the Czech Republic since 1999. However, these changes refer to legislative alterations first of all. Another important step, i.e. the promotion of legal demands in practice, goes on much more slowly.

In spite of that, more and more activities related to further development of safety and health protection at work may be observed in the Czech Republic. The trend towards the prevention of risks is growing. However, not only risks of physical jeopardy are in question, but the emphasis is laid on psychosocial factors, especially on the influence of stress on the general level of job performance and the safety of employees.

Thanks to the aforesaid facts, safety and health problems are approaching the sphere of management and work organisation. Consequentially, the problems of work with the staff and human safety at work acquire special importance.

People, workers as well as employers, and their subjective perception of safety problems are the main objects of empirical inquiries realised within the project Good Neighbour.

The view represented by both presented surveys documents, to a certain extent, purely subjective opinions of respondents.

The subjective evaluation made by all participants plays the principal part in the process of further development of safety and health care. This is first of all because of the fact that the studied problems as a whole are based on the man and his personal evaluation as on the opposite pole to rational, objectified data.

Undoubtedly, the core of interest in safety and health protection at work cannot only lie in the attempt to minimise costs of damaged health. The endeavour must consist in health and human life protection approached as the protection of values which cannot be expressed in money.

Thus, further improvement of safety and health protection at work in the Czech Republic should be perceived not only from the viewpoint of work effectiveness increase and future integration of the Czech Republic in the EU, but also and first of all as the way of approaching the level of advanced countries in which human health as an irreplaceable value and its protection belong to the priority interests.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative inquiries was chosen for this survey to cover the studied population as well as the studied question to the maximum extent.

The first part of survey is formed by the quantitative inquiry the initial purpose of which was to map opinions and attitudes of the Czech population connected to safety and health protection problems and related themes.

The goal of the following qualitative survey is first of all a deep analysis of respondents' attitudes and opinions, including the mapping of deep motivation and opinion platform. The qualitative inquiry also provides the knowledge of specific conceptual framework used by the Czech population in connection with the studied problems.

2. QUANTITATIVE INQUIRY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The quantitative survey is the first of the series of realised empirical inquiries. It is oriented to provide a general view of the studied problem in the Czech population and also tries to record statistically important relations among individual aspects of the studied matter. Within this inquiry, maximum demands were laid on the sample representative character. Thanks to that, the results can be generalised maximally on the relevant Czech population.

The quantitative survey provides, with regard to the character of investigations, the basic quota of entry information for the following qualitative studies.

2.2 GOALS

The survey was oriented to monitoring the following concepts:

- complex perception of labour protection problems
- normative importance of labour protection
- extent of information on the issue – labour protection training is included within this field
- attitudes to one's own jeopardy/protection within the labour protection
- position of health protection in the order of values related to work
- attitudes to the development of safety and health programmes

2.3 PARTICULAR STUDIED AREAS

The research concentrated on the following particular areas:

respondents' socio-demographic characteristics,
satisfaction in occupation,
the most important factors for the choice of employment,
subjective evaluation of one's own labour protection,
the importance given by the respondents to the labour protection at workplace,
risks to which the respondents are considerably exposed during work,
subjective evaluation of the attention paid to the labour protection by the employer,
labour protection training,
internal regulation ensuring the safety operation and the health protection at work,
occupation accidents,
health troubles,
board level,
perception of changes in labour protection.

2.4 METHODOLOGY

After formulating principal inquiries and specifying the basic set, a preliminary pilot study was carried out in the Czech population. Based on these measures, the research method and the selective sample make-up process were selected and the data collection method was specified. The elaborated questionnaire was tested in the preliminary survey. In accordance with the results of preliminary survey, the final correction of research instruments was made.

Owing to the fact the pilot study showed possible unwillingness of the Czech population to participate in the interviews, chiefly in consequence of the negative publicity of concurrent census, we decided to use the questionnaire forms distributed personally by interviewers to respondents' households as an alternative to the quantitative interviews. The completed questionnaires were returned to the interviewers in the term fixed in advance. To prevent an increased extent of distortions in answers, mainly caused by the participation of other family members, a short period of time was preferred to fill in the questionnaire.

The questionnaires administration was realised in such a way so as no doubts about the respondents' absolute anonymity may have arisen.

The principle investigated set consisted of economically active Czech population in the productive age, i.e. 15 – 64 years old, in which relatively the highest capability to reflect the above issues could be presumed.

N = 1000 respondents, of which 940 questionnaire sheets were included in the final processing.

The select error in the given range of research reaches at most 3%, at 5% importance level usual for this type of research.

The set of respondents was chosen by multiple stage sampling – 29 localities were chosen for the survey to represent the Czech Republic to the maximum extent from the viewpoints of individual regions and settlement sizes. The respondents were represented proportionally in the sample, according to the size of their residence. A random area specification was made in the selected localities according to particular needs.

Experienced and well-tried agency interviewers participated in the research. Besides the standard training, they underwent a special training so that their capability corresponded to particular demands laid within the given quantitative research.

The data acquired by inquiries were transferred into the electronic form, then analysed statistically and went through the statistic assessment to increase the extent of generalisation.

The data were collected in March 2001. No complications were recorded during this process. With regard to the use of flexible methodology, the questionnaires returnability was more than 90 %. No systematic character of sample reduction was proved.

3. SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

3.1.1 Sample Division According To Respondents' Age

Table 1
Sample division according to respondents' age (in per cents)

| Age | Share of respondents – in per cents |
|-------------------|--|
| 15 – 24 years old | 19.0 |
| 25 – 34 years old | 23.3 |
| 35 – 44 years old | 21.9 |
| 45 – 54 years old | 26.4 |
| 55 – 64 years old | 9.3 |
| Total | 100.0 |

In the category of 15 – 24 years of age 19.0 % of respondents are included.

In the category of 25 – 34 years of age 23.3 % of respondents are included.

In the category of 35 – 44 years of age 21.9 % of respondents are included.

In the category of 45 – 54 years of age 26.4 % of respondents are included.

In the category of 55 – 64 years of age 9.3 % of respondents are included.

3.1.2 Sample Division According To Respondents' Sex

Table 2
Sample division according to respondents' sex (in per cents)

| Sex | Share in per cents |
|------------|---------------------------|
| Men | 52.8 |
| Women | 47.2 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Men form 52.8 % of respondents.

Women form 47.2 % of respondents.

3.1.3 Sample Division According To Respondents' Education

Table 3
Sample division according to respondents' education (share in per cents)

| Education | Share in per cents |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Basic school | 4.7 |
| Skilled operative | 35.2 |
| Secondary school | 44.9 |
| University | 15.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

In the category of persons with basic school education there are 4.7 % of respondents.
 In the category of skilled operatives there are 35.2 % of respondents.
 In the category of persons with secondary school education there are 44.9 % of respondents.
 In the category of persons with university education there are 15.0 % of respondents.

3.1.4 Sample Division According To Respondents' Marital Status

Table 4
Sample division according to respondents' marital status (share in per cents)

| Marital Status | Share of respondents in per cents |
|-----------------------|--|
| Married | 58.0 |
| Single | 30.3 |
| Divorced | 8.6 |
| Widowed | 2.6 |
| Total | 100.0 |

In the category of married there are 58.0 % of respondents.
 In the category of single there are 30.3 % of respondents.
 In the category of divorced there are 8.6 % of respondents.
 In the category of widowed there are 2.6 % of respondents.

3.1.5 Sample Division According To The Number Of Respondents' Children

Table 5
Sample division according to the number of respondents' children (in per cents)

| Number of children | Share of respondents in per cents |
|---------------------------|--|
| None | 33.8 |
| One and more | 66.2 |
| Total | 100.0 |

33.8 % of respondents have no children, 66.2 % of respondents have one or more children.

3.1.6 Sample Division According To Respondents' Job Status

Table 6
Sample division according to respondents' job status (in per cents)

| Job status | Share of respondents in per cents |
|--|--|
| Employers | 4.6 |
| Employees | 90.4 |
| Working individually without employees | 5.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

4.6 % of respondents belong among employers.
 90.4 % of respondents are employees.
 5.0 % of respondents are persons working individually without employees.

3.1.7 Sample Division According To The Company Owner

Table 7
Sample division according to the owner of the company where the respondents work (in per cents)

| Mother Country of Company Owner | Share of respondents in per cents |
|--|--|
| Czech Republic | 76.0 |
| Foreign | 24.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

76.0 % of respondents work in companies without foreign owners

24.0 % of respondents work in companies with foreign participation

3.1.8 Division Of Population From The Viewpoint Of Working Areas

Table 8
Division of population from the viewpoint of working areas (share in per cents)

| Area | Share of respondents in per cents |
|--|--|
| Agriculture, hunting, forestry | 4.0 |
| Mineral mining | 1.5 |
| Processing industry | 26.9 |
| Power, gas and water production and distribution | 1.6 |
| Building industry | 9.2 |
| Market, motor vehicles and consumer products repairs | 12.9 |
| Hotel trade and accommodation | 3.3 |
| Transport, stocking, post and telecommunication | 7.8 |
| Banking and insurance business | 2.1 |
| Estate activities, lease of services for companies | 5.6 |
| Public service, defence, social security | 7.2 |
| Education | 6.2 |
| Health, veterinary and social activities | 6.1 |
| Other public, social and personal services | 3.8 |
| Total | 98.2 |

4.0 % of respondents work in agriculture, hunting and forestry.

1.5 % of respondents work in mineral mining.

26.9 % of respondents work in processing industry.

1.6 % of respondents work in power, gas and water production and distribution.

9.2 % of respondents work in building industry.

12.9 % of respondents work in market, motor vehicles and consumer products repairs.

3.3 % of respondents work in hotel trade and accommodation.

7.8 % of respondents work in transport, stocking, post and telecommunication services.

2.1 % of respondents work in banking and insurance business.

5.6 % of respondents work in real estates, lease and services.

7.2 % of respondents work in public service, defence and social security.

6.2 % of respondents work in education.

6.1 % of respondents work in health, veterinary and social services.

3.8 % of respondents work in other public, social and personal services.

3.2 FINDINGS ACQUIRED BY PARTICULAR INQUIRIES

3.2.1 Inquiry About Satisfaction In Employment

Table 9
Satisfaction in employment (in per cents)

| Are you satisfied in your employment? | Share of respondents in per cents |
|--|--|
| Yes | 68.3 |
| No | 20.5 |
| I don't know | 11.2 |
| Total | 100.0 |

68.3 % of respondents are satisfied in their employment. 20.5 % of respondents are not satisfied. 11.2 % of respondents answered: "I don't know."

The analysis showed that women are more frequently represented among the satisfied respondents than men.

Among the respondents who are not satisfied at work the proportion of persons perceiving their work as dangerous and admitting increased risks, especially the risk of noise, dust and vibrations, is statistically much bigger. Most of all, the dissatisfied persons are relatively motivated by financial profit.

In general, men manifest a lower level of satisfaction at work. Simultaneously, men are motivated by financial reward more frequently at work and men are just the workers who judge their work dangerous and are exposed to a number of risks. This tendency appears especially in case of married men with children. We suppose that just these men form a large group of inhabitants of the Czech Republic – dissatisfied workers in dangerous, rather manual professions, performing their work mainly to provide their families with necessary financial income.

The persons satisfied in their occupation manifest less health troubles or stress symptoms, above all, irritation, palpitation and stomach-ache.

Secondary school and university educated people as well as people looking for their self-realisation in their occupations are more satisfied.

We managed to prove the connection between the existence of internal regulation and the feeling of satisfaction. The respondents satisfied in their employment also think more often that their labour protection training was sufficient and at the same time they are convinced about the importance of such training.

Anyway, the satisfaction in occupation is definitely connected to the feeling the sufficient attention is paid to the labour protection at work.

3. 2.2 Factors Playing The Most Important Part At The Choice Of Employment

Table 10
Factors influencing the choice of employment (in per cents)

| What plays the most important part at your choice of employment? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Financial evaluation | 77.4 |
| Pleasant working environment | 40.1 |
| Good relations at workplace | 39.0 |
| Self-realisation | 30.6 |
| Professional progress | 21.0 |
| Generally calm working atmosphere | 17.2 |
| Safety workplace | 10.3 |
| Job stability | 4.9 |
| Other answer | 1.9 |

From the viewpoint of factors playing an important part at the choice of employment, the respondents selected most often the following variants:
 financial evaluation (this answer was selected by 77.4 % of respondents)
 pleasant working environment (40.1 % of respondents)
 good relations at workplace (39.0 % of respondents)
 self-realisation (30.6 % of respondents)
 professional progress (21.0 % of respondents)
 generally calm working atmosphere (17.2 % of respondents)
 safety workplace (10.3 % of respondents)
 job stability (4.9 % of respondents)
 other answer was selected by 1.9 % of respondents (the distance from respondent's residence to his/her workplace appeared most often within this variant).

It is evident that the safety of workplace is not regarded as the key factor for the choice of employment. A number of other factors play much more important part and the financial evaluation appears as the most important of them.

Financial evaluation and the need of job stability appear more often as men's motivations. Owing to the fact men evaluate their professions more often as dangerous and are not satisfied in them at the same time, we suppose that this result confirms more or less our assumption about the group of workers whose primary goal is to sustain their families. Though some respondents of this group mark the safety of workplace as an important factor for the choice of employment, it does not by far reach the importance of financial reward.

The safety of workplace as the factor playing an important part at the choice of employment is more important for persons who have undergone the labour protection training. There is an evident connection between more frequent training and subjective importance of labour protection. People who know the internal safety regulations very well mark the safety of workplace as a decisive factor for the choice of employment statistically more often. This factor is also underlined by people who suffered some occupation accident in the past. People who perceive the safety of workplace as important for the choice of employment, state statistically more often they would welcome further changes in the labour protection.

People suffering from health troubles regard the safety of workplace as important to the increased extent. However, it is interesting that people who connect their health troubles with their employment do not stress the importance of the safety workplace. Most probably it is because the respondents do not connect these troubles caused by increased stress, or their causes, to the problems of labour protection. This fact confirms our assumption that while the physical jeopardy is usually connected with the labour protection, the psycho-social factors are not.

From the viewpoint of the needs of safety operation and health protection at work some other factors may be regarded as relevant, first of all a pleasant working environment and a generally calm atmosphere at the workplace.

The working environment and the safety are statistically closely connected. The pleasant environment is more important for educated people, young people (more often 25 – 34 years old) and for single and childless respondents. The pleasant environment is more important for women than for men.

The calm working atmosphere is also more important for women than for men, however, in general it is much less important for people with a high need of self-realisation.

3.2.3 Subjective Evaluation Of One's Own Safety At Work

Table 11
Evaluation of one's own safety at work (in per cents)

| Do you evaluate your work as safe? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Very safe | 24.5 |
| Quite safe | 50.0 |
| Rather dangerous | 17.7 |
| Very dangerous | 2.8 |
| I don't know, I can't decide | 5.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

24.5 % of respondents evaluate their work as very safe, 50.0 % of respondents regard their work as quite safe, 17.7 % of respondents regard their work as rather dangerous, 2.8 % of respondents for very dangerous and 5.0 % of respondents are not able to evaluate the rate of danger or safety.

The work is evaluated as dangerous chiefly by persons exposed to physical jeopardy, i.e. persons working in professions with the increased risks of fire, noise, dust, vibrations, chemical contamination or jeopardy by other person.

The persons exposed to biological risks evaluate their work as quite safe. The same stands for the professions with the increased risk of stress.

The persons who feel that the sufficient attention is paid to the labour protection at their workplace regard their work as safe.

The persons who suffered an occupation accident regard their work safer than the persons who did not suffer any occupation accident.

The persons with some health troubles perceive their work as quite safe as well.

The persons who have the possibility of regular meals evaluate their work as quite safe, the persons without the above possibility evaluate their work more often as dangerous.

Men evaluate their professions as dangerous more often than women.

University educated people regard their professions as safe, skilled operatives regard them more often as dangerous. People with basic school education are not often able to judge the situation.

People with children judge their work as less safe than people without children. It may be caused by the feeling of increased responsibility which leads to the higher demands laid on safety. However, the reason may also be that a part of parents, especially fathers, accept dangerous work to sustain the family.

3.2.4 The Importance Assigned By The Respondents To The Safety Of Workplace

Table 12
Perceived importance of the safety of workplace (in per cents)

| What importance do you assign to the safety of workplace? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Essential | 31.8 |
| Quite big | 43.0 |
| Rather small | 10.8 |
| None | 3.8 |
| I don't know, I don't think about it | 10.7 |
| Total | 100.0 |

38 % of respondents assign essential importance to the safety of workplace. For 43.0 % of respondents the safety is of quite big importance, while for 10.8 % of respondents the safety has rather small importance. For 3.8 % of respondents the safety of workplace has no importance and 10.7 % of respondents do not know or do not think about this issue.

The respondents with children assign bigger importance to the safety of operation.

The respondents who underwent the labour protection training assign bigger importance to the safety of workplace than the respondents who did not undergo such training. The subjective importance given to the labour protection increases with the increased frequency of training.

The respondents who evaluate the training level as sufficient assign essential importance to the safety of workplace. The respondents who evaluate the undergone training as insufficient more often assign smaller importance to the safety of workplace. The respondents whose workplaces dispose of internal safety regulations, alternatively the respondents who know their contents, assigned the essential importance to the safety of workplace significantly more often.

The persons who think that sufficient attention is paid to the labour protection at their workplace assign bigger importance to this issue than the persons who are convinced that the attention to this problem is insufficient. The persons who regard the safety of workplace as important would welcome further changes in this area more often.

Thus, it may be said that the frequency and the quality of labour protection training as well as the quality and adequately explained internal regulations increase the awareness of these problems, the importance assigned by workers to the safety operation and health protection at work, and their interest in further development in this area.

3.2.5 The Risks The Respondents Are Considerably Exposed To During Work

Table 13
The risks the respondents are considerably exposed to during work (in per cents)

| Which of these risks are you considerably exposed to during your work? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Risk of fire, explosion, burn | 13.4 |
| Injury by electric current | 9.7 |
| Noise | 29.6 |
| Dust | 22.2 |
| Vibrations | 5.0 |
| Radiation | 5.6 |
| Chemical contamination | 5.7 |
| Biological risks | 5.2 |
| Stress, nervousness (psychic strain) | 51.6 |
| Physical jeopardy by other person | 11.4 |
| Other – risk of car accident | 0.9 |

Most of respondents – 51.6 % - stated they are exposed to stress, nervousness and psychic strain to an increased extent. 29 % of respondents are exposed to noise, 22.2 % of respondents are exposed to dust. The increased risk of fire, burn or explosion is given by 13.4 % of respondents. 11.4 % of respondents are considerably exposed to the risk of physical jeopardy by other person. 9.7 % of respondents are exposed to the increased risk of injury by electric current in their professions. The risk of chemical contamination is given by 5.7 % of respondents, the increased risk of radiation is stated by 5.6 % of respondents. The increased jeopardy by biological risks is admitted by 5.2 % of respondents. The risk of vibrations is given by 5.0 % of respondents. Less than 1 % of respondents gives the risk of car accident.

The persons significantly jeopardised by fire or explosion acknowledge more often that they have suffered occupation accidents. Moreover, a significant part of them is convinced the attention paid to the labour protection at their workplace is insufficient, in spite of the fact the group of respondents jeopardised by fire or explosion undergo safety training more often than once a year. The respondents exposed to the risk of radiation also say they undergo frequent training.

The persons exposed to an increased extent of noise and the risk of injury by electric current state frequent safety training. However, the persons exposed to the risk of dust state they have not undergone any training statistically more often. (But a part of these persons undergoes the training more often than once a year.) People exposed to dust at workplace regard the undergone labour protection training as sufficient as well.

Anyway, the respondents who mention the risk of dust state health troubles and suffered occupation accidents significantly more often. The analysis did not prove any connection between the risks of physical jeopardy, i.e. mainly the risk of injury by electric current, the risk of fire, noise, dust and vibrations on the one hand and the risk of stress or psychic strain on the other hand.

The noise appears most often in mining and processing plants, the dust is in mining, processing and building industries. People working in companies with foreign participation are exposed to the risk of dust statistically more often.

The risk of vibrations is admitted more often by respondents who suffer some of the following troubles: somniphathy, irritation, anxiety and unease, and indigestion. Concurrently, injuries are more frequent in this group of respondents.

It is interesting that people exposed to vibrations evaluate changes in the past three years as for the worse statistically more often. The same evaluation is given by people exposed to the risk of jeopardy by other person at their workplaces. Obviously, these respondents would welcome further changes in safety.

The persons exposed to the jeopardy by other person manifest frequent health troubles, especially irritation, anxiety and headaches.

All people mentioning the risk of accident work in Czech companies, i.e. no respondent working in a foreign company mentions the risk of accident.

Interesting results came out of the analysis of the increased risk of stress or psychic strain.

The persons who state they are exposed to the increased risk of stress also mention their health troubles statistically more often. This result could be presumed owing to the fact all the given troubles belong to the indicators of psychic stress. The increased risk of stress perceived subjectively is, according to the accomplished analysis, closely connected mainly with somniphathy, irritation, anxiety, unease and also headaches. People suffering from stress connect their trouble symptoms to the performance of their jobs more often. This may be caused by the level of education (as well as of information on the problems related to stress) which enables to this group of respondents to judge their troubles in a more complex way.

However, the risk of stress does not usually mean a direct jeopardy of workers. The respondents exposed to the increased psychic strain state most often they have never suffered any occupation accident. Possible influence of stress exerted on the physical condition is rather manifested as standard stress symptoms and serious injuries occur rather indirectly, in consequence of psychosomatic or other illnesses related to stress.

People exposed to the increased stress have no opportunity to eat regularly statistically more often. Therefore, an increased risk of digestive disorders should be presumed.

Men are exposed to the majority of physically determined risks (mainly to fire, dust, noise, vibrations and jeopardy by other person) to higher extent than women.

Biological risks are more frequently mentioned by women. It is probably because women comprise the majority of workers in health-service institutions where the biological risks prevail. For this reason, the exposure to biological risks does not almost appear in companies with foreign participation.

According to the analysis, women are more jeopardised by the risk of stress than men.

The professions connected to the risk of fire, explosion, dust, noise, vibrations and jeopardy by other person are generally evaluated as dangerous by the respondents. On the other hand, the professions connected to the increased risk of stress or psychic strain are more often evaluated as safe.

Equally, the professions with biological risks are evaluated as relatively safe.

The risk of physical jeopardy is most often connected to the subjective evaluation of respondent's total safety at work. It also influences the feeling of satisfaction in occupation. On the other hand, a number of respondents do not connect the risk of stress or psychic strain to the labour protection at all.

3.2.6 Subjective Perception Of The Extent Of Attention Paid By An Employer To The Labour Protection

Table 14
Subjective perception of the extent of attention paid by an employer to the labour protection (in per cents)

| Do you feel that sufficient attention is paid to the labour protection at your workplace? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Yes | 65.8 |
| No | 16.3 |
| I don't know | 17.9 |
| Total | 100.0 |

65.8 % of respondents think that sufficient attention is paid to the labour protection at their workplaces. 16.3 % of respondents however say the attention paid to this issue is insufficient. 17.9 % of respondents do not know.

The feeling of sufficient attention to the issue of labour protection is significantly increased by the frequency of undergone training. In case the respondents undergo the training once a year or more often, they usually feel the attention to this issue is sufficient. On the contrary, if the respondents do not undergo the training, they feel more often that the attention paid to the labour protection is not sufficient at their workplaces.

The subjective feeling of employer's attention is also increased by the quality of undergone training as well as the existence and knowledge of internal regulations.

More than one third of people who suffered an occupation accident feel twice and more frequently that the attention paid to the labour protection is insufficient at their workplaces. These persons probably presume the cause of their accidents may be looked for in the safety work politics of workplace.

People who feel the attention to the labour protection is insufficient at their workplaces suffer from health troubles more often, mainly from somniphathy, memory disorders, headaches and digestive troubles. They are ill more often.

The subjective perception of employer's approach to this issue is also influenced by the reflection of changes which occurred at workplace in the past three years. The persons stating changes for the better are convinced more often the attention paid to this issue is sufficient at their workplace and vice versa.

Men are statistically more often dissatisfied with the level of attention to this matter as well as people with basic school education and people working manually. On the other hand, university educated people evaluate the labour protection at workplace mostly as sufficient.

Workers in German companies evaluate the attention to the labour protection at workplace as insufficient statistically more often. On the other hand, workers in British companies never state negative evaluation.

The respondents working in public health and education manifest the best evaluation in this issue.

3.2.7 Labour Protection Training

Table 15
Labour protection training (in per cents)

| Have you undergone the labour protection training at your workplace? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Yes | 80.3 |
| No | 15.4 |
| I don't know, I can't remember | 14.2 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Table 16
Frequency of labour protection training at workplace (in per cents)

| How often does the labour protection training take place at your workplace? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Never | 16.1 |
| Less than once a year | 19.9 |
| About once a year | 50.4 |
| More than once a year | 13.6 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Table 17
Subjective feeling of labour protection training adequacy (in per cents)

| Do you think your training in labour protection was sufficient? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Yes | 65.0 |
| No | 12.2 |
| I don't know, I can't judge | 22.8 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Table 18
Subjective perception of the importance of labour protection training (in per cents)

| Do you regard the labour protection training as important? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Yes, very important | 48.6 |
| Important only in some professions | 46.4 |
| Rather unimportant | 3.8 |
| Absolutely useless | 1.2 |
| Total | 100.0 |

80.3 % of respondents say they have undergone the labour protection training at their workplace. 15.4 % of respondents have not. 4.2 % of respondents do not know or they cannot remember.

On the other hand, 16.1 % of respondents mention no training takes place at their workplaces. 19.9 % of respondents undergo the training at least once a year, 50.4 % of respondents approximately once a year. The training is organised more often than once a year at the workplaces of 13.6 % of respondents.

65.0 % of respondents evaluate the labour protection training as sufficient. 12.2 % of respondents evaluate the training as insufficient and 22.8 % of respondents do not know.

The safety training is regarded as important by 48.6 % of respondents. 46.4 % of respondents regard the training important only in some professions.

The training is rather unimportant for 3.8 % of respondents and 1.2 % of respondents think the training is absolutely useless.

The respondents who underwent the labour protection training state more often there are internal regulations available at their workplaces and they know their contents well. The majority of respondents who did not undergo the safety training do not know the contents of internal regulations.

In case of more frequent training and in case of the training evaluated as sufficient, there is a growing number of respondents stating the existence of internal regulations to ensure safety operation and health protection at their workplaces. With growing training frequency, the level of knowledge of the internal regulations is growing unambiguously.

The respondents stating they have undergone the labour protection training mention less often their health troubles. These troubles are more often admitted by the respondents who do not know whether they have undergone the safety training.

The respondents who have undergone the training mention the changes realised in this area are for the better. The respondents who have not undergone the training declare more often there were no changes in safety of operation and health protection.

If the training is carried out once a year or more often, it influences positively the evaluation of training quality – the respondents trained like this conclude the safety training was sufficient.

The respondents undergoing the labour protection training more often than once a year think most often their health troubles are undoubtedly connected to the performance of their occupations. Among the persons regarding their training as sufficient an opinion prevails that their health troubles are not rather connected to the performance of their occupations.

The persons who have never had any occupation accident regard their training as sufficient statistically more often. However, the persons regarding their training as insufficient have suffered a bigger number of occupation accidents.

Men are trained statistically more often than women.

Respondents with children – and also married respondents state more often they have undergone the labour protection training. Undoubtedly, the age of respondents plays a significant part in it (the

longer is the period of work, the bigger is the probability of training), however, more frequent participation in training is probably connected to the higher responsibility of one's health and safety. Thus, the finding that the group of married respondents with children regard the safety training as important is corresponding.

The married respondents and the respondents with children evaluate the level of training as sufficient.

The companies with foreign participation organise the training more often and this training is evaluated as sufficient statistically more often.

The subjective evaluation of the training importance is significantly higher in foreign companies as well.

3.2.8 Internal Regulation Ensuring The Safety Operation And Health Protection At Work

Table 19
Awareness of the existence of internal regulation to ensure the safety operation and health protection at workplace (in per cents)

| Is there an internal regulation ensuring the safety operation and health protection available at your workplace? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Yes | 69.0 |
| No | 12.5 |
| I don't know | 18.5 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Table 20
Knowledge of the internal regulation content (in per cents)

| Do you know what the regulation contains? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Yes, very well | 21.3 |
| Quite well | 36.6 |
| Rather little | 21.2 |
| No, in fact | 21.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

69.0 % of respondents state there are internal regulations available at their workplaces. 12.5 % of respondents are convinced there are not and 18.5 % of respondents do not know about their existence.

21.3 % of respondents are informed very well about the content of internal regulation. 36.6 % of respondents know the content quite well. 21.2 % of respondents know the content rather little and 21.0 % of respondents do not know it at all.

The persons who know the content of internal regulation manifest statistically less health troubles. On the contrary, the respondents who know very little or nothing about it suffer from anxiety, unease, stomach-ache and digestive troubles more often.

Women manifest their higher knowledge of internal safety regulation than men. Correspondingly, the knowledge of internal regulation is higher among secondary school educated people as there are more women in this category.

The level of the internal regulation knowledge is statistically significantly connected to the age. Older respondents know the internal regulation better than younger. To a certain extent, the following results are corresponding: single respondents know the internal regulations less than the married ones and the respondents with children know them better than the childless ones.

The analysis has also proved that employers know the internal regulations very well, employees know them quite well more often. Individually working people do not usually know any internal regulation.

The existence of internal regulation is more often mentioned in case of foreign companies. The foreign companies workers state more often they know the content of internal regulation well or very well.

3.2.9 Occupation Accidents

Table 21
Number of occupation accidents during a carrier (in per cents)

| How many times have you suffered an occupation accident during your carrier? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Never | 64.4 |
| Once | 19.0 |
| Twice | 10.6 |
| More than twice | 6.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

64.4 % of respondents have never suffered any occupation accident. 19.0 % of respondents have suffered one accident, 10.6 % of respondents have suffered two accidents, 6.0 % of respondents have suffered more than two accidents.

The respondents who have suffered at least one occupation accident state they would welcome further changes in the field of safety and health protection at work. The respondents who have not suffered any occupation accident so far say they do not know whether they would welcome any changes.

The occupation accidents are more frequent with men, especially skilled operatives.

3.2.10 Health Troubles

Table 22
Health trouble symptoms (in per cents)

| Which of the following symptoms have you suffered lately? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Somnipathy | 21.9 |
| Memory disorder | 5.4 |
| Irritation | 24.4 |
| Anxiety, unease | 13.6 |
| Stomach-ache | 4.9 |
| Headache | 31.3 |
| Digestive troubles | 11.0 |
| Palpitation | 6.9 |
| Frequent illnesses | 3.6 |
| None | 31.8 |

Table 23
The extent of subjective relation of the given health trouble symptoms to the performance of occupation (in per cents)

| Do you think these health troubles are connected to your occupation? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|---|---|
| Certainly | 20.3 |
| Rather yeas | 37.9 |
| Rather no | 26.3 |
| Of course not | 6.6 |
| I don't know, I can't decide | 8.9 |
| Total | 100.0 |

31.8 % of respondents state they do not suffer from any health troubles. 31.3 % of respondents suffer from headaches, 24.4 % of respondents are irritated, 21.9 % of respondents suffer from somnipathy. 13.6 % of respondents feel anxiety and unease. 11 % of respondents suffer from indigestion. 6.9 % of respondents have palpitations, 4.9 % of respondents suffer from stomach-aches. 3.6 % of respondents are frequently ill. Sporadically, the respondents completed backaches and other troubles, e.g. eczema.

The above symptoms strongly correlated with one another, i.e. a number of respondents stated more symptoms at the same time. This tendency was expected owing to the fact all the aforesaid symptoms can be regarded not only as partial symptoms of physical troubles, but also stress or psycho-somatic symptoms.

Young, single and childless respondents have no health troubles. Surely, their physical and psychological resistance is caused by their young age, but these persons are not exposed to such stress in their private lives as well.

People with basic school education are ill more often than other groups. There are two possible explanations: Firstly, these persons work in more risky positions because of their low qualification where the human health can be seriously impaired. Secondly, frequent illness is the matter of rational calculation. These persons prefer being on sickness benefit to regular work.

Men state more often than women they have no health trouble symptoms. However, this trend may be caused by the pressure of social standards thanks to which men are not inclined to admit any health complications, especially those determined psychically.

Women admit their health troubles more often, first of all headaches and anxiety.

The respondents who have no possibility to eat regularly at work suffer from health troubles more often, and in some cases, e.g. digestive troubles, casual connection may be presumed. Another explanation is that people who have no time to eat because of their work load usually occupy more challenging positions. Thus, stress at work is the main cause of their troubles. Another analysis result corresponds to this: if the respondents have no opportunity to eat regularly, they connect their health troubles to the performance of their jobs more often.

20.3 % of respondents are convinced that the given troubles are *certainly* connected to their professions. 37.9 % of respondents think the troubles *may be* connected to their professions. 26.3 % of respondents state their troubles are not rather connected to their professions and 6.6 % of respondents say their troubles are not definitely connected to their professions.

The most frequent symptoms connected to the performance of respondents' professions are: somniphathy, irritation and anxiety.

3.2.11 The Quality Of Board

Table 24
The possibility of regular board at work (in per cents)

| Can you eat regularly during your work? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Certainly | 40.5 |
| Rather yes | 38.5 |
| Rather no | 18.2 |
| Never | 2.9 |
| Total | 100.0 |

40.5 % of respondents answered the question about the possibility of regular eating at work positively – they certainly can eat regularly. 38.5 % of respondents say they can eat rather regularly. 18.2 % of respondents declare they have rather no possibility to eat regularly at work and 2.9 % of respondents have no possibility to eat regularly at all.

Under certain circumstances, the possibility of regular eating may become a quality indicator of care taken of employees. People who eat regularly suffer from health troubles less frequently, are more satisfied in their jobs and evaluate the changes which took place in the past three years more positively. However, it is highly probable that these positive attitudes have no direct, uncompromising relation to the possibility of regular meals. They are rather connected to the total level of care devoted to the safety operation and the health protection at work.

3.2.12 Perception Of Changes In Labour Protection

Table 25
Changes perceived in the area of safety operation and health protection at work in the past three years (in per cents)

| What changes occurred in labour protection at your workplace in the past three years? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| None | 62.2 |
| Changes rather for the better | 31.5 |
| Changes rather for the worse | 6.2 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Table 26
Assessment of changes in the area of safety operation and health protection at work in the past three years (in per cents)

| Would you welcome further changes in labour protection? | Share of respondents' answers in per cents |
|--|---|
| Yes | 34.5 |
| No | 19.4 |
| I don't know, I don't think about it | 46.1 |
| Total | 100.0 |

62.2 % of respondents think no changes occurred in the area of labour protection in their company in the past three years. 31.5 % of respondents observed changes rather for the better, while 6.2 % of respondents registered changes rather for the worse.

People who registered any changes in this area declare statistically more often they would welcome further changes.

On the contrary, the respondents who did not record any changes at their workplaces are rather sceptical as for future changes or cannot judge the situation.

34.5 % of respondents would welcome further changes, 19.4 % of respondents would not. 46.1 % of respondents state they do not think about it.

The persons who feel the attention paid to the labour protection at their workplace is sufficient declare more often they do not need further changes for the better. The same result was recorded in the group of persons who regard the undergone labour protection training as sufficient.

4. SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Within the order of values related to respondents' employment, the issue of labour protection is usually perceived as less important. The factors playing primary parts at the choice of employment are financial evaluation, pleasant environment and good relations at workplace.

However, more than three thirds of respondents stated they assign fundamental or quite big importance to this issue.

Relatively low assessment of importance of labour protection in comparison to other factors may be caused by the fact that the majority of respondents evaluate their work as safe and so do not regard the provision of labour protection as their primary need.

The majority of respondents state the attention paid to the labour protection is sufficient at their workplaces.

More than three fourths of respondents underwent the labour protection training at their workplaces. On the other hand, owing to the fact the minimum entry safety training is obligatory by law for all workers, the given result may prove serious faults made by some Czech employers.

The safety training usually takes place once a year at Czech workplaces.

Two thirds of respondents think their training was sufficient.

Approximately one half of respondents regard the labour protection training as important, the majority of others think it is important only in some professions. The qualitative analysis of open answers revealed the respondents have in mind mainly manual professions.

Almost seventy percents of respondents have internal regulations at their disposal in their companies, about one half of respondents knows their contents well.

It should be stressed here that on the results of this research the total level of care devoted to the issue of labour protection in foreign companies is proved to be higher.

The respondents employed in foreign companies undergo the labour protection training more often and regard it as sufficient more often as well. Foreign companies have internal regulations available more often to ensure the safety operation and the health protection at work. Their employees declare good knowledge of these regulations statistically more often as well.

More than one half of respondents say they are exposed to the increased risk of stress.

However, the mental strenuousness of work is not usually put into relation with the labour protection.

The respondents associate the labour protection mainly with accidents and physical jeopardy, much less with overall stress.

The research revealed that the care of labour protection, i.e. employer's interest in this issue, increases considerably employees' satisfaction.

The feeling of employer's interest is increased by the frequency and the quality of undergone training.

Further changes in labour protection would be welcomed by almost 35 % of respondents. However, almost one half of respondents answered they did not think of this matter. This result more or less supports our assumption there is a group of people within the Czech population who do not think of the problems of safety and who are rather sceptical. Obviously, the behaviour of this group documents a more general trend existing in the Czech population, chiefly the attempt to ignore perceived problems because they will never be solved anyway.

Another significant phenomenon existing in the Czech Republic is the presence of respondents who are able to reflect the importance of safety operation and health protection at work on the one hand, but on the other hand they are primarily motivated at work by financial profit and the corresponding endeavour to sustain their families. This group is chiefly formed of middle-aged, married men with children.

Generally, it is possible to say the middle-aged, married respondents with children are more sensitive and frank as for the labour protection.

The Czech population as a whole proved to be quite sensitive to the labour protection. The answers of many respondents reveal a great number of areas perceived as uncovered and there is quite a strong trend within the relevant population to participate in further changes in this area.

However, a great potential is hidden in persons who are presently rather negligent to this issue, as well. It is necessary to convince this group, mostly formed of young people, about the necessity of further changes.

The best situation from the viewpoint of monitored problems is undoubtedly in foreign companies. It was proved that standards effective in mother countries are largely transferred to the Czech environment.

5. INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The quantitative research was followed by individual in-depth interviews with individual respondents which enabled a deep insight in the problems of perception of safety of operation and health protection at workplace.

5.1.1 Targets

The research monitored the following principal issues:

- subjective perception of the problems of safety operation and health protection at workplace
- normative significance of the problems of safety operation and health protection at workplace
- extent of information on this issue, in general as well as particular context, e.g. in a working position
- attitudes to the possibility of one's own jeopardy at work
- position of health protection in the order of values, inquiries about the extent of importance of safety operation and health protection at workplace as one of the decisive factors for the choice of employment
- attitudes to the development of programmes of safety operation and health protection
- subjective perception of the situation in the sphere of safety operation and health protection in the Czech Republic in comparison with EU countries

5.2 METHODOLOGY, SELECTIVE FILE CHARACTERISTIC

After formulating principle inquiries and carrying out the preliminary investigation within the studied problem in the Czech population, the research method was chosen including the method of compilation of respondents' selective file. Further, the construction of research instruments was made, i.e. the basic inventory of questions was created.

The investigation method consisted in the *individual in-depth interviews* (IDI) at which interviewers asked respondents questions based on a partially structured inventory. The answers including records of respondents' spontaneous reactions, their possible comments, remarks and notes were categorised by the interviewers and subsequently recorded on answer sheets. With this type of inquiry, great emphasis was put on observation and records of respondents' informal reactions, monitoring their non-structured comments, which enabled recording of a specific conceptual scope used in the target population in connection with the studied problems. IDI enable to stress the individual perception of given questions by an individual, give a more detailed picture of the monitored sphere and their results form important basis for interviews in focal groups.

In the course of preliminary research the selected research instruments were tested in a limited sample of respondents. In accordance with the results of preliminary research, the research instruments were corrected, including the judgement of questions.

Individual items of interviews generally came out of the structure of quantitative questionnaire form, which enabled a closer capture of the given subject of investigation. However, for the purpose of the given approach and in harmony with the fixed conception of research, they were enlarged especially by items ensuring deeper motives and connections. At the same time, a space for free associations and expression of one's own perception of the monitored problems was given in the inventory.

The principal investigated file was formed of economically active population of the Czech Republic, i.e. of respondents 15 - 64 years old. In this part of investigation, with regard to a larger research intention, we endeavoured to find a suitable compromise between the maximum coverage of the studied problem and the necessary demands on the representative quality of the sample. For the purpose of this research, nineteen localities were chosen to represent the territory of the Czech Republic from the viewpoint of territorial division and sizes of settlements. (For selective file characteristics see Chart 1, Truth Table 1 and Chart 2)

The selective file consisted of 180 respondents.

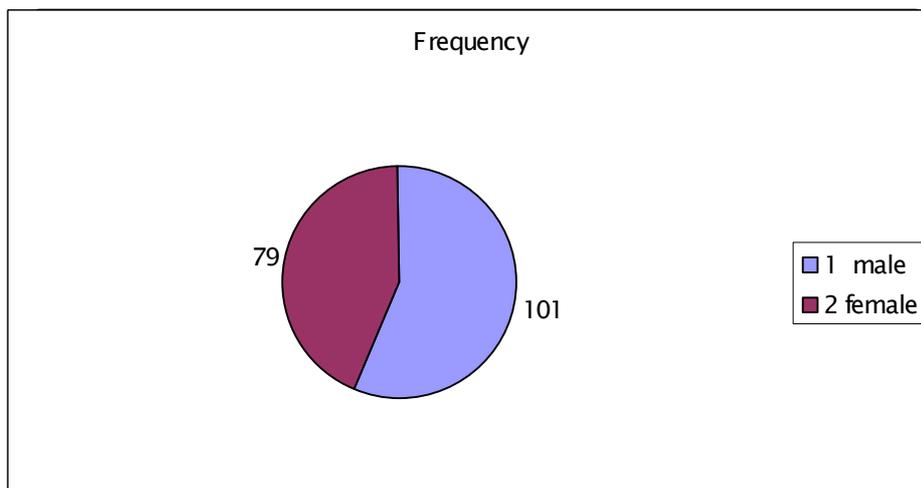


Chart 1 – Selective File according to Sex (absolute values)

The research itself took place in March 2001. The data were collected by experienced interviewers who were trained especially for this purpose. Their team fully corresponded to all requested demands. At this type of direct interviews the interviewers must fulfil not only standard demands on an adequate level of their behaviour and presentation, but moreover, they must be able to observe and record respondent's reactions found out in the course of investigation in a corresponding way. The data collection ran without problems and in absolute order.

Truth Table 1
Principal file according to age

| Age | Frequency |
|--------------|------------------|
| 15-24 | 32 |
| 25-34 | 51 |
| 35-44 | 39 |
| 45-54 | 44 |
| 55-64 | 14 |
| Total | 180 |

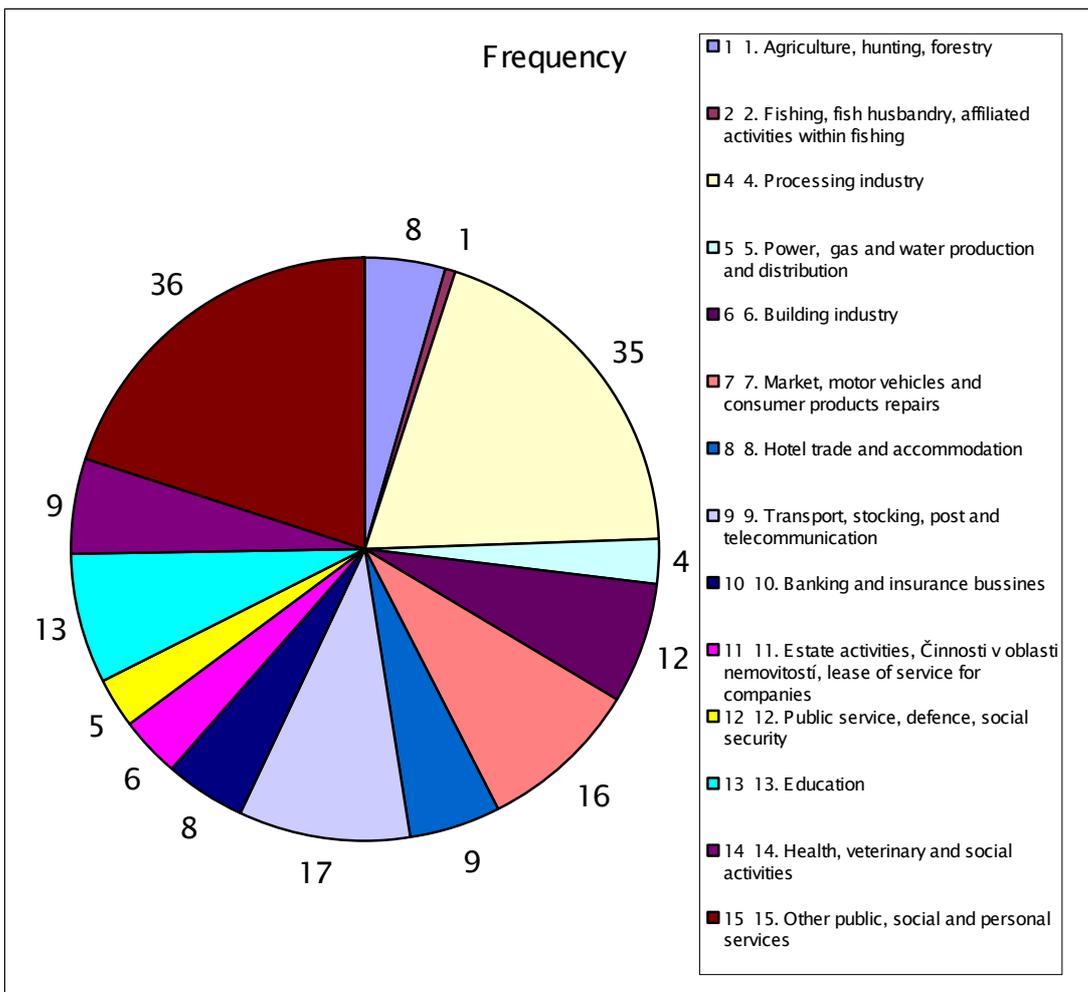


Chart 2 – Selective File according to Working Area (absolute values)

6. RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF LABOUR PROTECTION

The problems of safety of operation and health protection at work in fact refer to every man. In spite of that, these problems may sometimes seem to be underestimated, pushed behind, nor the sufficient attention is paid to them. Though, it is evident that underestimation or rejection of existing or possible risk may have the worst consequences. How do employees and workers themselves perceive the given problem? What is the importance of labour protection for them? What is in their opinion the meaning of the expression "labour protection"? Are they aware of possible risks in their profession, and if so, what makes them undertake the risks? Are they informed about possible dangers? These are some of the questions monitored in this part of investigation.

To be able to get to know the way of respondents' approach to the given questions, we first needed to know how they define the given problems themselves and what in their opinion belongs to the sphere of labour protection.

6.1.1 Perception Of The Importance Of The Problems

We have made an interesting finding that the respondents themselves perceive the importance and necessity of normative component of the whole area. In absolute majority of cases they regard safety standards and regulations as well as their observation as its most important part. On the heels of the aforesaid, there are safety working aids including their consistent use. The third aspect of those mentioned most frequently, i.e. an appeal to workers' discipline, is closely connected with the aforesaid. From this results that the respondents are aware of the importance of personal attitude of individual workers to the defined normative framework of health protection and safety at work. However, every individual's responsibility must go hand in hand with information on possible risks and with the instructions how to precede dangers and solve quickly possible crises. Another corresponding substantial factor necessary for creation of safe conditions at workplace is suitable prevention including training ment just for this purpose.



Chart 1 – Perception of the Most Important Components of Safety Operation and Health Protection at Work

6.1.2 Perceived Possibilities Of Improvement of Safety Operation And Health Protection At Workplace

What would contribute, in respondents' opinions, to the improvement of safety operation and health protection at workplace? In brief, it may be said that the answers to this question correspond significantly to the framework given above. Besides a certain part of respondents who states they have not thought about the problem, the majority thinks that the solution lies in more responsible approach of workers to the observation of safety regulations and to the use of safety aids, better equipment of workplace and deeper and more frequent training of employees. It is interesting that a significant part of respondents points to the reserves of workers themselves. One respondent gave a very symptomatic answer: I would. The workers may know about possible risks, but if they are not motivated sufficiently or warned methodically against the threats, they may underestimate or neglect them.

The majority of respondents has never suffered any occupation accident during his/her carrier. Of those who have, men are represented more frequently than women.

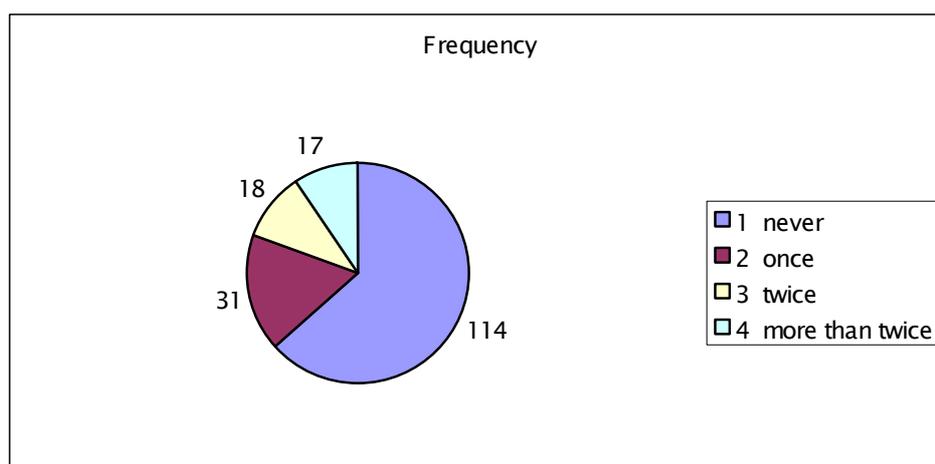


Chart 3 – How Many Times Have you Suffered Occupation Accident during your Carrier? (absolute values)

6.1.3 Perceived Health Troubles Subjectively Connected To Employment

Although the absolute majority of respondents evaluate their employment as safe, a certain part of them feels some health troubles at the same time which are, in their opinion, directly connected to their occupation. The most frequent troubles are headaches, irritation, somniphathy, anxiety and indigestion. Other subjectively perceived troubles connected to the occupation are eczema and backaches. Generally, men complain of these problems more than women, most frequently university educated men. However, a significant group of respondents does not state any similar troubles in direct correlation to their occupations. Owing to the fact that the above symptoms may be generally connected to the individual's life style, it would be very difficult to find out their real reasons. For example, the possibility of having regular meals during work was confirmed by the absolute majority of respondents, but the troubles with indigestion and stomach-ache are frequent as well. No matter what the reasons of individual troubles are, it is important that the respondents themselves perceive them as closely connected to their occupation.

6.1.4 Labour Protection Training

The thumping majority of respondents state they have already undergone the labour protection training taking place at their workplaces approximately once a year. More than one half of respondents are convinced that their training is sufficient. However, various proposals were pronounced concerning the question whether they would improve somehow employees' training. The most frequent demands can be expressed in the following words: to increase attractivity and objective approach. "It would be good to see some film about it", "I miss attractiveness". To be said in other words: everybody is not able to reflect the explanation of a set of regulations in its factual form. It may be said that the statement of risks, the explanation of the set of regulations and subsequent sanctions in case the regulations are not observed provide information, but need not be sufficient. As the answers reveal, stronger motivation for keeping active knowledge of the contents of safety standards could lie in the approximation of explanatory conceptual framework to the perception of common employees together with the presentation of particular examples of possible consequences in case of neglecting or violating individual safety standards and regulations.

The labour protection training is generally regarded as important by the respondents and its importance is increasing in some professions. Danger work is prevailingly understood as the work carried out by manual workers and employees in some other areas. The professions mentioned most frequently were electricians exposed to the risk of injury by electric current, firemen exposed to the risk of fire, miners, workers in chemical plants and laboratories, policemen exposed to the risk of injury by other persons, employees in building industry, medical staff and rescuers, etc. Generally, it is possible to say that the respondents perceived the increased importance of labour protection training in such professions the performance of which is closely connected to the possible direct jeopardy of health.

6.1.5 Internal Regulation And Its Subjective Knowledge

The overwhelming majority of respondents state that there are internal regulations ensuring safety operation and health protection at their workplaces and they are convinced of their good knowledge of the contents of the above regulations. The respondents who admitted they did not know the regulations were especially women.

It is very stimulating to know that the respondents working in international companies the major owners of which come from EU countries manifested very good knowledge of these problems. Besides their good knowledge of safety operation and health protection regulations, they completed

thorough training and emphasized the importance of observing the standards. Generally, the respondents are informed about the problems of labour protection and assign importance to them. According to the individual interviewees, the aforesaid respondents manifested themselves as self-confident persons aware of normative factors and possible risks.

6.1.6 Order Of Principle Factors For The Choice Of Employment And The Position Of Safety Operation And Health Protection At Workplace Within its Framework

As it has already been said above, the absolute majority of respondents is convinced about the safety of their employment. Simultaneously, they stress the fact that the sufficient attention is paid to the problems of safety operation and health protection at their workplaces. A significant part of respondents revealed that the safety workplace is of great importance for them. In connection with the aforesaid, the order of principal factors playing an important part during the choice of respondent's occupation is quite interesting. The first place is indisputably occupied by the financial evaluation and the job stability. Another important motive is the self-realisation at work. According to the acquired answers, the labour protection appears as marginal in the choice of future occupation together with the request of pleasant working environment, generally calm working atmosphere and surprisingly, the possibility of professional progress and some other factors as a good working team, care of employees, distance from the employee's residence to work, etc. What influences the fact that though the significant part of respondents assigns the great importance to the safety of workplace, this demand plays only a marginal part during the choice of employment? One of the possible explanations may be the following: The respondent takes an automatic account of provision of his subjectively requested level of safety operation and health protection at workplace. Generally, the idea of sufficient meeting of his/her demands in the given area in a new employment is matter-of-course for him/her. Thus, he/she does not regard this factor so important to adjust his/her selection to it.

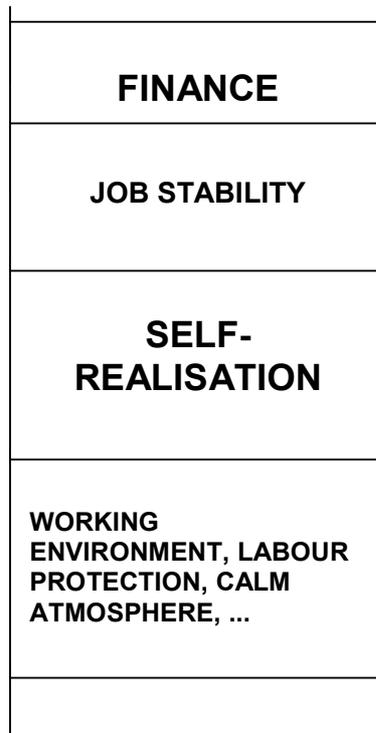


Chart 2 – Order of Principle Factors for the Choice of Employment

Demands of safety operation and health protection at workplace change considerably in dependence on the sex, the age, the marital status and the number of children. Less emphasis on the level of the given area is laid by the young, single and childless, prevailingly men. On the other hand, married women – mothers have higher demands. Men’s interest in their own safety increases with the number of children.

6.2 ATTITUDES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LABOUR PROTECTION PROGRAMMES AND THE SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION OF THE EXISTING SITUATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND EU COUNTRIES

Besides the perception of the problems of safety operation and health protection at work from the viewpoint of an individual, wider attitudes and opinions connected to the studied problems formed an integral part of the research as well.

As for the awareness and information about institutions dealing in the area of labour protection in the Czech Republic, the following three institutions were mentioned most frequently: the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Labour Protection Institute, the Labour Protection Research Institute and individual hygienic departments.

6. 2.1 Perceived Changes In The Monitored Area

It was difficult for the respondents to answer the questions if there were in their opinion some changes in labour protection at their work in the past three years and if they would welcome possible changes. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that they could not see any marked progress in this issue. Almost a half of them said they did not know or had never thought about the contribution of these changes for them in the given area, which is surprising. However, as the previous results of this investigation revealed, this seeming scepticism may result from the fact that the whole matter is very wide and for many respondents it is difficult to understand its means of interpretation. Thus, it may be difficult for them to express their opinion to this matter.

6. 2. 2 Subjective Evaluation Of Safety Operation And Health Protection At Workplace. Comparison Of The State In The Czech Republic And EU Countries

At the moment the respondents were to evaluate the labour protection in the Czech Republic in comparison with the EU countries, they mostly oscilated between two variants. Most often they thought the situation in the Czech Republic was worse in comparison with the EU countries, but immediatly they admitted they did not follow the situation in a sufficient way and so could not judge it responsibly. The principle differences are firstly seen by the respondents in finances enabling the EU countries to get up-to-date working equipment, to take better care of their employees and to make more frequent inspections supporting the observation of safety standards and regulations.

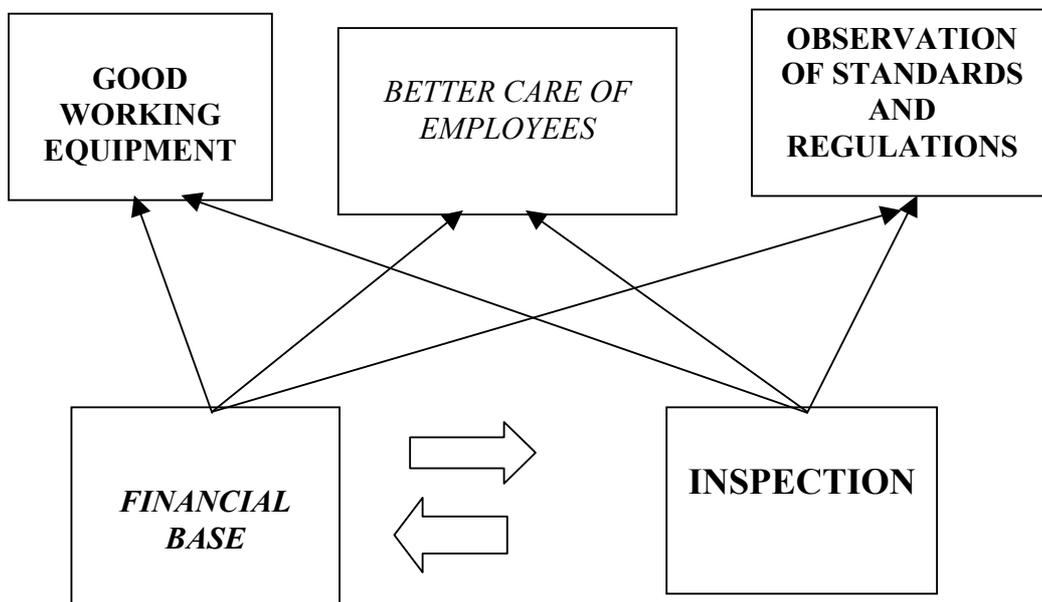


Chart 3 – Principle Factors Influencing the State of Labour Protection

7. REACTIONS AND COMMENTS

The respondents were very frank and helpful. Naturally, it was the easiest for them to speak about the themes touching them directly. To give statements about the complex of problems within the Czech Republic or European context was obviously much more difficult for them.

8. INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

Safety standards and regulations, protective aids, employees' discipline and regular and thorough training are regarded as the most important factors in safety operation and health protection at work.

According to the respondents, the labour protection could be mainly improved by observing standards and regulations, using protective aids, sufficient safety equipment and thorough employees' training.

The overwhelming majority of respondents were trained in safety operation and health protection at work. When they were to define the aspects improving the training, they identified first of all the higher attractiveness and the objective approach. The significant part of respondents employed in international companies with the country of origin situated in the European Union manifested very good awareness of this issue and good knowledge of labour protection standards and regulations.

The considerable part of respondents feel health troubles which connect directly to the performance of their occupations.

The absolute majority of respondents classify their employments as safe.

Though the great importance is laid on the safety operation and the health protection, this factor did not belong to the factors decisive for the choice of employment. Women had higher safety demands than men and these demands increased with both men and women in dependence on their age, marital status and the number of children.

The respondents did not register any significant changes in the labour protection in the past three years.

The situation in the sphere of labour protection in the Czech Republic in comparison with the EU countries was perceived as worse by the respondents, or they could not judge it. According to the respondents, the main advantages of foreign companies are the financial base and the regular inspections, which enables the adequate equipment of workplace, better evaluation of employees and the supervision over observing labour protection standards and regulations.

9. CONCLUSION

The safety standards and regulations, the protective aids, employees' discipline and the regular and thorough training are regarded as the most important factors in safety operation and health protection at work.

According to the respondents, the labour protection could be mainly improved by observing the standards and the regulations, using the protective aids, sufficient safety equipment and thorough employees' training.

Within the factors connected to the respondents' occupations, the matter of labour protection is usually perceived as less important. On the contrary, the financial evaluation belongs to the most important factors. This fact was confirmed by both surveys.

The marginal position of labour protection at work among other factors may be also caused by the fact that the most respondents judge their work as safe and so do not regard the provision of labour protection at workplace as their primary need.

The majority of respondents state that the sufficient attention is paid to the labour protection at their workplaces.

Both surveys also revealed that the thumping majority of respondents underwent the labour protection training at their workplaces. When they were to define the aspects which in their subjective opinions could improve the training, they firstly identified the higher attractiveness and the objective approach. The significant part of respondents employed in international companies with the country of origin situated in the European Union manifested very good awareness of this issue and good knowledge of labour protection standards and regulations.

The labour protection training takes place once a year at Czech workplaces.

In most cases, the respondents think their training in the field of safety operation and health protection at work was sufficient.

An important part of respondents state that they regard the labour protection training as important, most of the others think that the training is important especially in some professions. The qualitative analysis of open answers revealed that the respondents have in mind especially blue-collar and manual professions.

It should be stressed that the results of research confirmed the general level of labour protection is higher in companies with foreign participation.

Employees of foreign companies undergo the labour protection training more often and they more often state the training is sufficient. As well, foreign companies dispose of labour protection internal regulations more often and their employees confirm good knowledge of these regulations statistically more often than employees of companies without foreign participation.

More than one half of respondents say they are exposed to an increased risk of stress or psychic pressure. However, the psychic strenuousness is not usually understood in connection with the health protection. The respondents connect the labour protection with injuries and physical jeopardy much more often than with the overall stress.

The research revealed that employer's interest in the labour safety and the care he devotes to this problem increases employees' satisfaction considerably.

The increased frequency of training and its improved quality manifest the employer's interest in the given issue.

The respondents did not register any significant changes in the field of safety operation and health protection at work in the past three years.

The respondents would mostly welcome changes in the given area. However, they answered simultaneously they did not think about this problem. This result supports our assumption there is a group of persons within the Czech population which does not think about the problem of labour protection and which is rather distrustful. The behaviour of this group documents probably a more general trend existing within the Czech population, especially the attempt to ignore the perceived problems because, as it is expected, they will never be solved.

Another important feature from the viewpoint of the Czech Republic is the presence of respondents who are able to reflect the importance of labour protection on the one hand, but on the other hand they are primarily motivated by their financial profit and the corresponding endeavour to sustain one's family. In this case, married, middle-aged men with children are involved. Generally, it may be said that the mentioned men are more sensitive and franker as for the labour protection.

The Czech population as a whole manifested itself as quite sensitive to the labour protection. Answers of many respondents indicate there are many areas within this issue perceived as uncontrolled and there is quite strong tendency within the relevant population to participate in further changes in these areas.

However, great potential is hidden in persons who are rather insensitive to the problems of labour protection at present. It is necessary to inform this group the majority of which is formed by young people about the need to realise further changes.

The situation in the sphere of labour protection in the Czech Republic in comparison with the EU countries was perceived as worse by the respondents, or they could not judge it. According to the respondents, the main advantages of foreign companies in the given area are the financial base and the regular inspection, which enables the adequate equipment of workplace, better evaluation of employees and the supervision over observing safety standards and regulations.

The current situation from the viewpoint of the monitored problems is relatively best in companies with foreign participation. Standards valid in mother countries of foreign companies are in most cases transferred to the Czech environment.

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Annexes

Part I

- Quantitative Research Results (Questionnaire, Charts)

EGO A&C
Kikerleho 17, Brno 627 00
www. ego.cz ego@ego.cz

This questionnaire is a part of research manifesting Czech population's attitudes to the problems of working conditions in the Czech Republic. The research was realised by the agency EGO A&C.

All data acquired in terms of inquiries will be used exclusively for the purpose of this research and cannot be abused in no case. The questionnaire is anonymous, therefore ***do not state your name anywhere, please.***

1. Are you satisfied with your occupation?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I don't think about it

2. What plays the most important part when you choose employment? (you may tick off more answers)

1. financial evaluation
2. self-realisation
3. pleasant working environment
4. safety workplace
5. good relations at workplace
6. job stability
7. professional progress
8. generally calm working atmosphere
9. other (state what)

3. Do you evaluate your job as safe?

1. very safe
2. quite safe
3. rather dangerous
4. very dangerous
5. I don't know, I don't think about it

4. What importance do you give to the safety workplace?

1. fundamental
2. quite big
3. rather small
4. none
5. I don't know, I don't think about it

5. Which of these risks are you considerably exposed to at work?

1. risk of fire, explosion, burn
2. injury by electric current
3. noise
4. dust
5. vibrations
6. radiation
7. chemical contamination
8. biological risks
9. stress, nervousness (psychic strain)
10. physical threat by other person
11. other (state what)

6. Do you feel that sufficient attention is paid to labour protection at your workplace?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know

7. What may increase, in your opinion, the labour protection at your workplace?

.....

8. Have you completed labour protection training at your employment?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I can't remember

9. How often does the labour protection training take place at your workplace?

1. never
2. less than once a year
3. about once a year
4. more often than once a year

10. Do you think that your training in labour protection was sufficient?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I can't judge

11. What would you improve at employees' training?

.....

12. Do you regard the labour protection training as important?

1. yes, very important
2. important only in some professions
3. rather unimportant
4. absolutely useless

13. In which professions do you regard the labour protection training as especially important?

.....

14. Are there internal regulations ensuring prevention of occupational accidents and disease at your workplace?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know

15. Do you know the contents of the regulations?

1. yes, very well
2. quite well
3. rather little
4. no, in fact

16. How many occupational accidents have you suffered during your carrier?

1. none
2. one
3. two
4. more than two (how many?)

17. Which of the following symptoms have you observed lately?

1. somnipathy
2. memory disorder
3. irritability
4. anxiety, unease
5. stomachache
6. headache
7. indigestion
8. palpitation
9. frequent illnesses
10. none (approach question 19)

18. Do you think that these problems are related to your profession?

1. certainly
2. maybe
3. rather no
4. not at all
5. I don't know, I can't decide

19. Can you eat regularly during your work?

1. certainly
6. rather yes
7. rather no
2. not at all

20. What changes in the labour protection took place at your workplace in the past three years?

1. no changes took place
2. changes quite for the better occurred
3. changes rather for the worse occurred

21. Would you welcome other changes in the labour protection?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I don't think about it

22. Age

1. 15 – 24 years
2. 25 – 34 years
3. 35 – 44 years
4. 45 – 54 years
5. 55 – 64 years

23. Gender

1. male
2. female

24. Education

1. basic school
2. skilled operative
3. secondary school
4. university

25. State

1. married
2. single
3. divorced
4. widowed

26. Number of children

1. none
2. one and more

27. Job status (name of your workplace or more detailed description)

.....

28. You are

1. employer
2. employee
3. working individually without employees

29. Do you work in an international company?

1. no (approach question 31)
2. yes

30. Country of the major owner of the company in which you work:

1. Slovakia
2. Germany
3. Austria
4. Great Britain
5. USA
6. France
7. other (give the name):

31. Working area

tick off the corresponding category

1. Agriculture, hunting, forestry
 2. Fishing, fish husbandry, affiliated activities with fishing
 3. *Mineral mining*
 4. *Processing industry*
 5. *Power, gas and water production and distribution*
 6. Building industry
 7. Market, motor vehicles and consumer products repairs
 8. Hotel trade and accommodation
 9. Transport, stocking, post and telecommunication
 10. Banking and insurance business
 11. Estate activities, lease of services for companies, research and development
 12. Public service, defence, social security
 13. Education
 14. Health, veterinary and social activities
- Other public, social and personal services

Thank you for your participation in our survey.

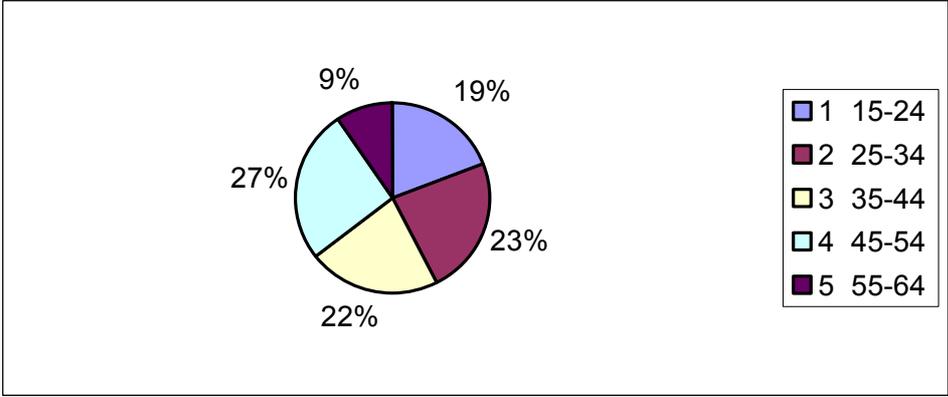


Chart 1 – Sample according to Age (%)

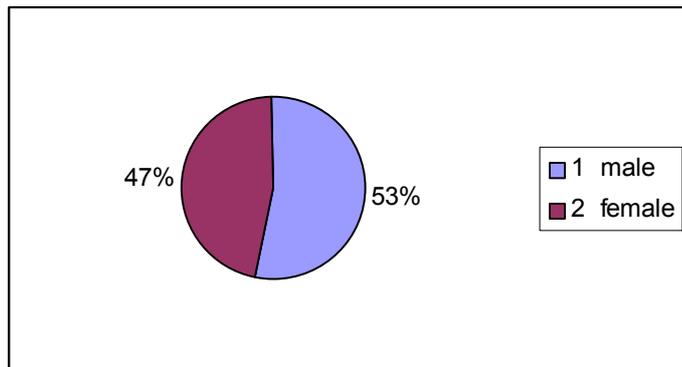


Chart 2 – Sample according to Gender (%)

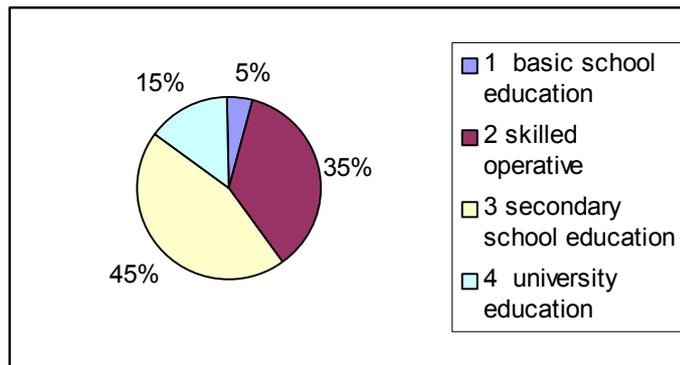


Chart 3 – Sample according to Education Level (%)

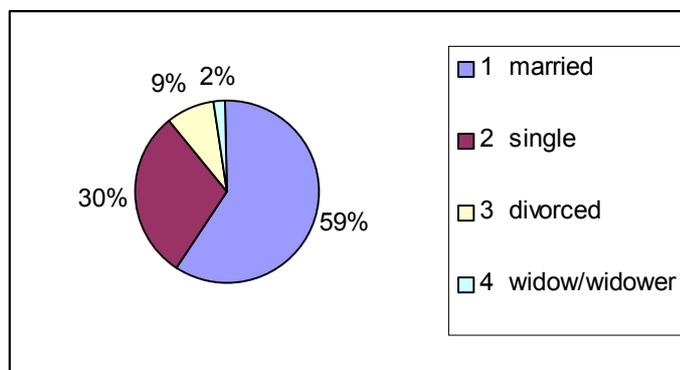


Chart 4 – Sample according to Marital Status (%)

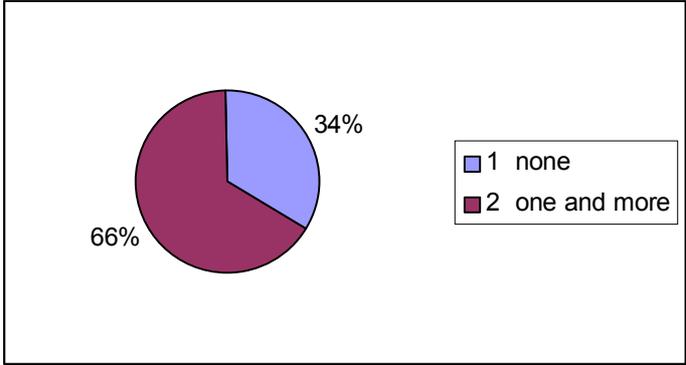


Chart 5 – Sample according to Number of Children (%)

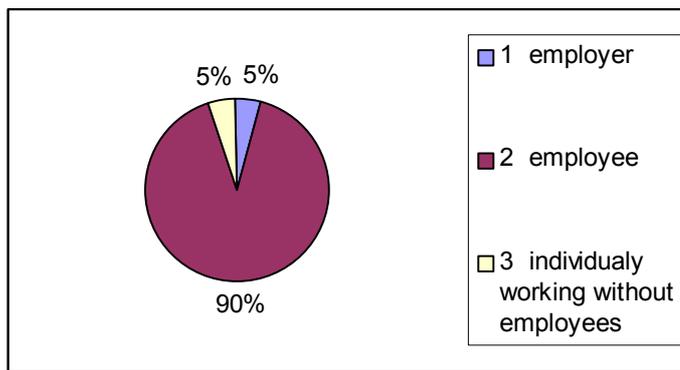


Chart 6 – Sample according to Job Status

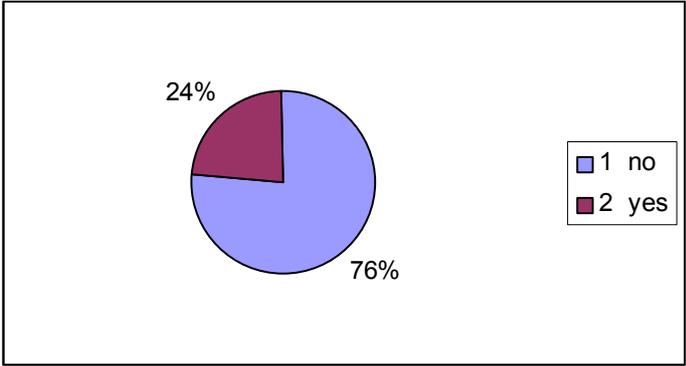


Chart 7 – Do you work in a international company? (%)

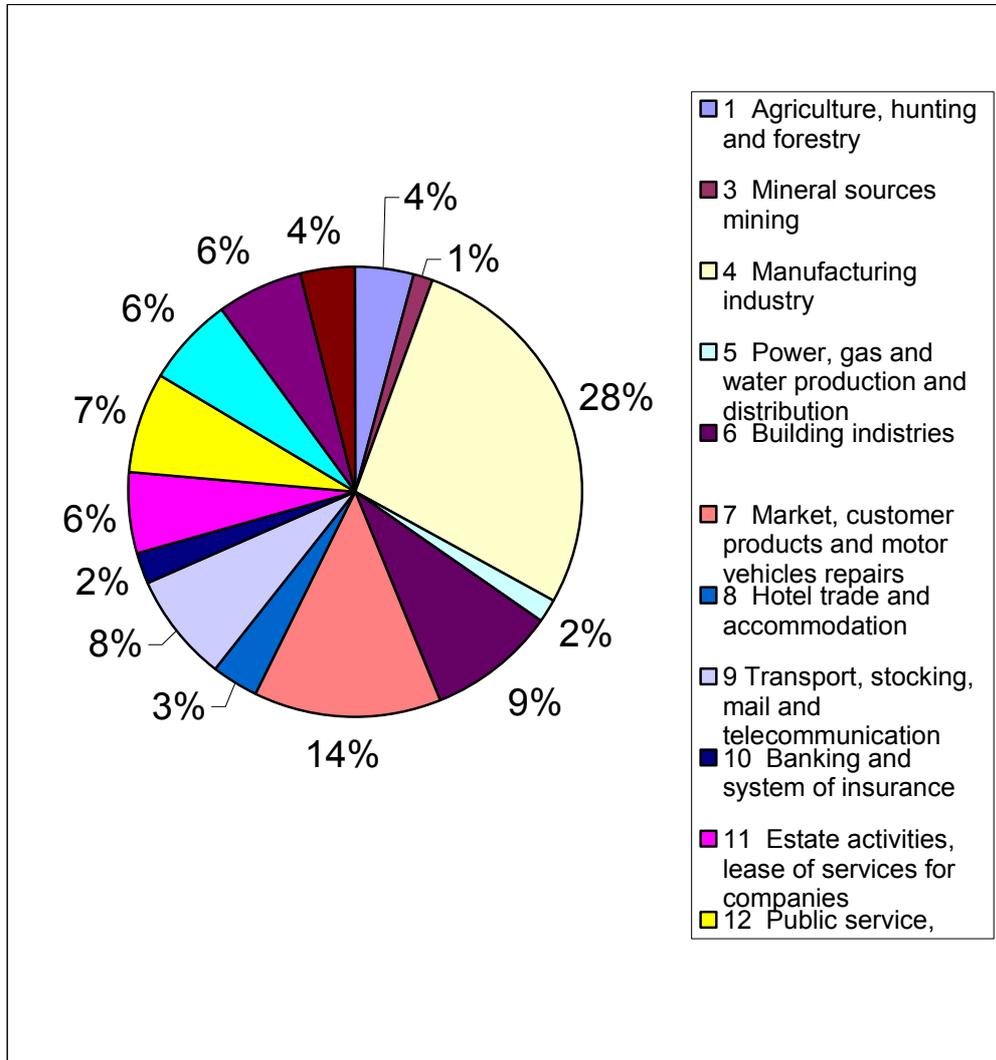


Chart 8 – Sample according to workarea (%)

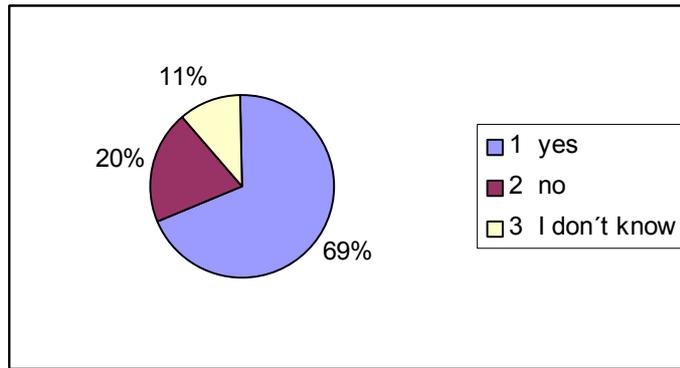


Chart 9 – Are you satisfied in your job? (%)

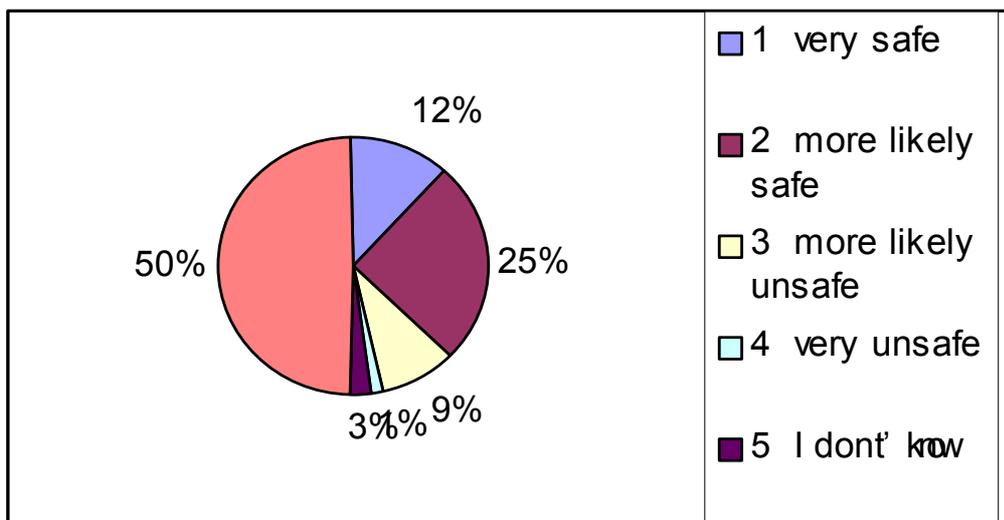


Chart 10 - Do you think your job is safe? (%)

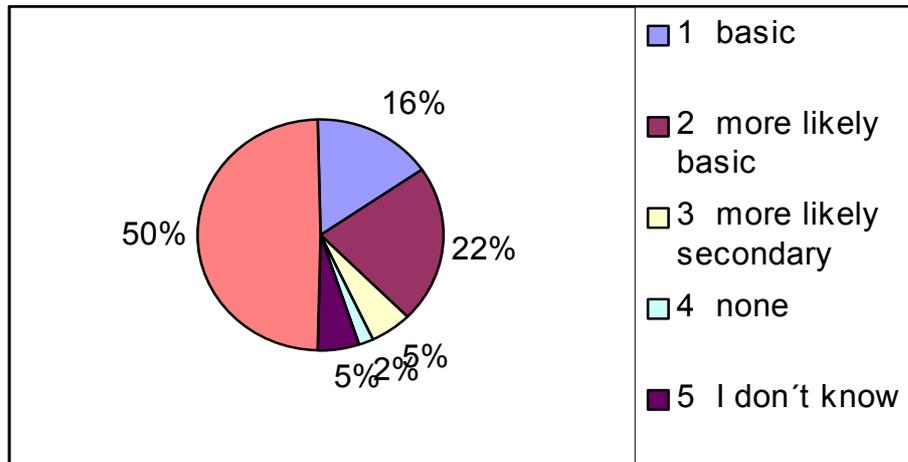


Chart 11 – How important is for you health safety and health protection? (%)

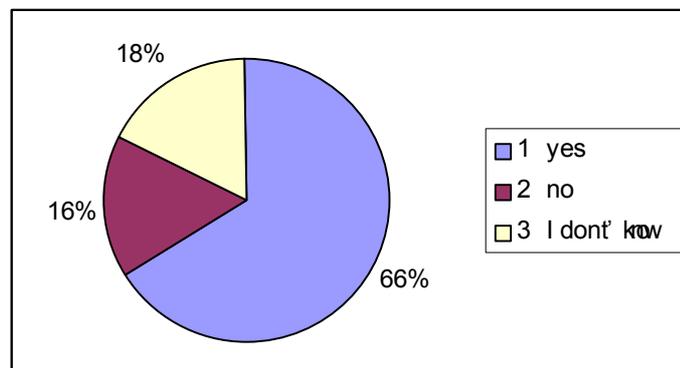


Chart 12 – Do you think that health safety and health protection is sufficiently reflected on your workplace? (%)

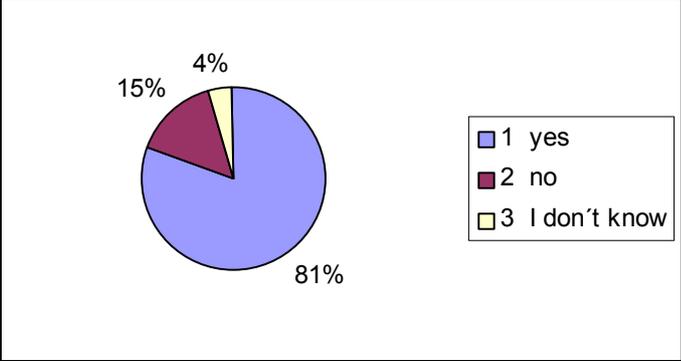


Chart 13 – Did you pass health safety and health protection training? (%)

Chart 14 – How often is health safety and health protection training on your workplace? (%)

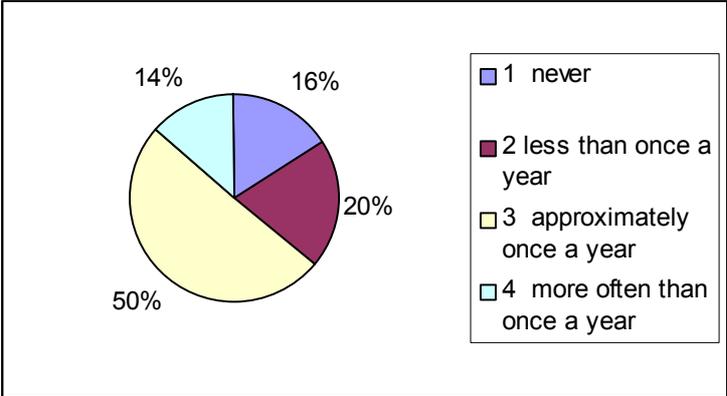
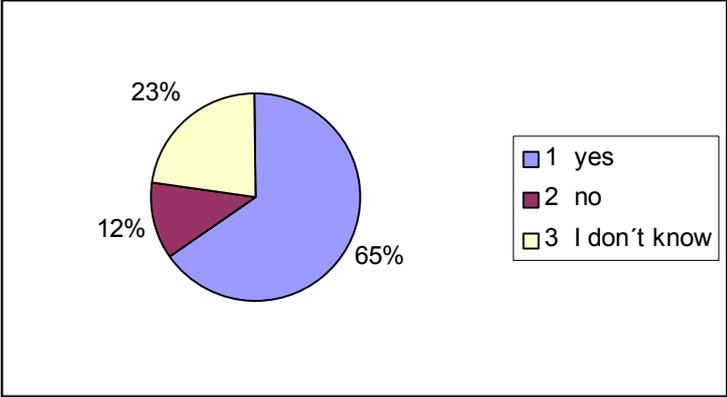


Chart 15 – Do you think your training is sufficient? (%)



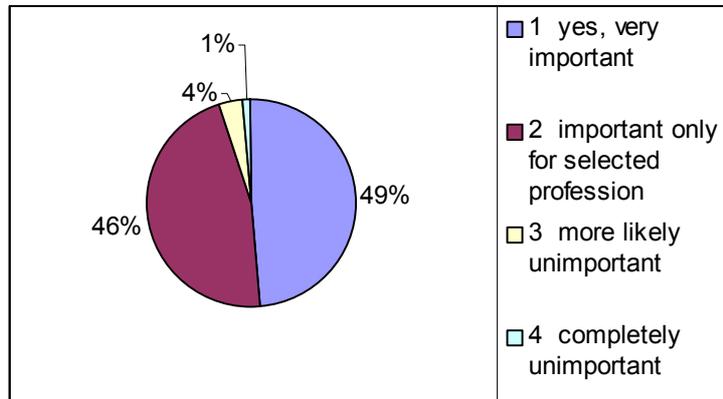


Chart 16 – Do you think the training is important? (%)

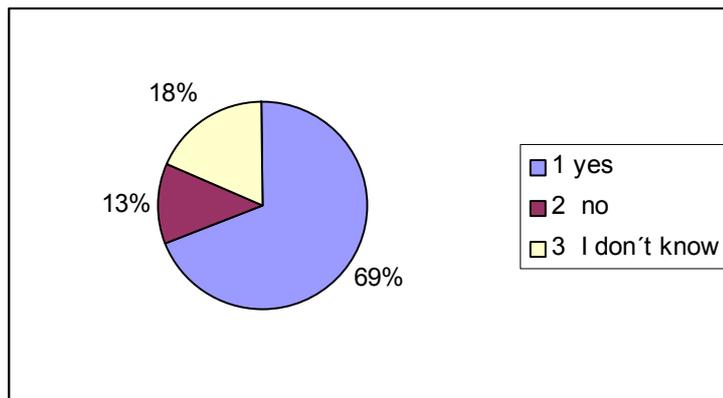


Chart 17 – Does exist any internal rule concerning health protection a health safety on your workplace? (%)

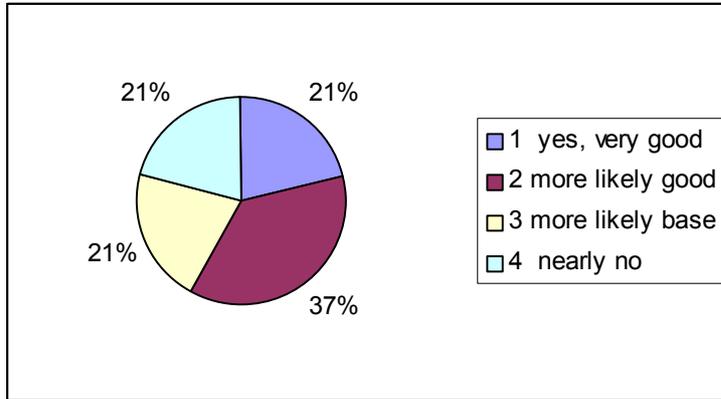


Chart 18 – Do you know what is included in the internal rule? (%)

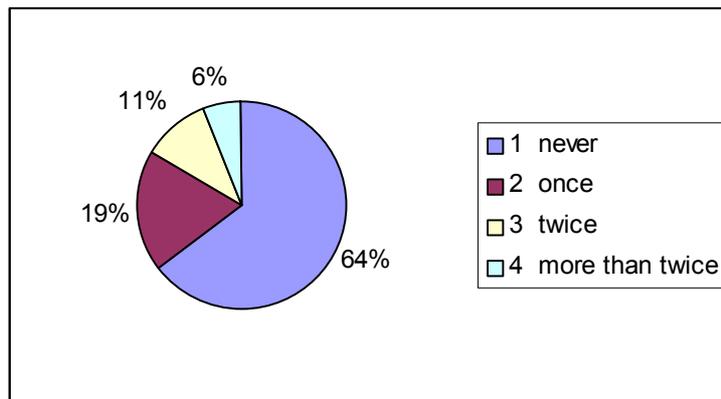


Chart 19 – How many work injuries did you suffer during your career? (%)

Part II

- Individual In-Depth Interviews (Question Inventory, List of Respondents, Charts)

Qualitative Interview

1. Are you satisfied with your occupation?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. I don't know, I don't think about it

2. What's in your opinion the importance of the following factors (circumstances) while choosing an employment?

(The answers are given on a separate sheet of paper. Please, mark the sheet with respondent's number and enclose to the questionnaire.)

3. Do you evaluate your job as safe?

- 1. very safe
- 2. quite safe
- 3. rather dangerous
- 4. very dangerous
- 5. I don't know, I don't think about it

4. What in your opinion belongs to the labour protection?

.....

5. What importance do you give to the safety workplace?

- 1. fundamental
- 2. quite big
- 3. rather small
- 4. none
- 5. I don't know, I don't think about it

6. Which of these risks are you considerably exposed to at work?

(The answers are given on a separate sheet of paper. Please, mark the sheet with respondent's number and enclose to the questionnaire.)

7. Do you feel that sufficient attention is paid to labour protection at your workplace?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 3. I don't know

8. What may increase, in your opinion, the labour protection at your workplace?

.....

9. Have you completed labour protection training at your employment?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I can't remember

10. How often does the labour protection training take place at your workplace?

1. never
2. less than once a year
3. about once a year
4. more often than once a year

11. Do you think that your training in labour protection was sufficient?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I can't judge

12. What would you improve at employees' training?

.....

13. Do you regard the labour protection training as important?

1. yes, very important
2. important only in some professions
3. rather unimportant
4. absolutely useless

14. In which professions do you regard the labour protection training as especially important?

.....

15. Are there internal regulations ensuring prevention of occupational accidents and disease at your workplace?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know

16. Do you know the contents of the regulations?

1. yes, very well
2. quite well
3. rather little
4. no, in fact

17. How many occupational accidents have you suffered during your carrier?

1. none
2. one
3. two
4. more than two (how many?)

18. Which of the following symptoms have you observed lately?

(The answers are given on a separate sheet of paper. Please, mark the sheet with respondent's number and enclose to the questionnaire.) – in case the respondent chooses variant 10, approach question 20.

19. Do you think that these problems are related to your profession?

1. certainly
2. maybe
3. rather no
4. not at all
5. I don't know, I can't decide

20. Can you eat regularly during your work?

1. certainly
2. rather yes
3. rather no
4. not at all

21. What changes in the labour protection took place at your workplace in the past three years?

1. no changes took place
2. changes more or less for the better occurred
3. changes rather for the worse occurred

22. Would you welcome other changes in the labour protection?

1. yes
2. no
3. I don't know, I don't think about it

23. What is in your opinion the labour protection in the Czech Republic in comparison with EC countries

1. better
2. worse
3. same
4. I don't know, I can't judge

24. What are the biggest differences between the Czech Republic and EC countries?

.....

25. What institutions dealing in the labour protection in the Czech Republic do you know?

.....

Respondent's social-demographic characteristics:

26. Age:

1. 15 – 24 years
2. 25 – 34 years
3. 35 – 44 years
4. 45 – 54 years
5. 55 – 64 years

27. Gender

1. male
2. female

28. Education:

1. basic school
2. skilled operative
3. secondary school
4. university

29. State:

1. married
2. single
3. divorced
4. widowed

30. Number of children:

1. none
2. one and more

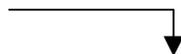
31. Job status (name of your workplace or more detailed description)

32. The respondent is:

1. employer
2. employee
3. working individually without employees

33. Does he/she work in an international company?

- 1. no
- 2. yes



34. Country of the major owner of the company in which you work:

- 1. Slovakia
- 2. Germany
- 3. Austria
- 4. Great Britain
- 5. USA
- 6. France
- 7. other (give the name):

35. Working area

tick off the corresponding category according to the respondent's spontaneous answer or name the possibilities to him/her

- 1. Agriculture, hunting, forestry
- 2. Fishing, fish husbandry, affiliated activities with fishing
- 3. *Mineral mining*
- 4. *Processing industry*
- 5. *Power, gas and water production and distribution*
- 6. Building industry
- 7. Market, motor vehicles and consumer products repairs
- 8. Hotel trade and accommodation
- 9. Transport, stocking, post and telecommunication
- 10. Banking and insurance business
- 11. Estate activities, lease of services for companies, research and development
- 12. Public service, defence, social security
- 13. Education
- 14. Health, veterinary and social activities
- 15. Other public, social and personal services

Questions for interviewer:

How did the respondent manifest himself/herself during the interview?

Did the respondent manifest any extreme reactions to any question/s?

Question no.

Reaction

.....



Which of these risks are you considerably exposed to at work?- tick off

1. **risk of fire, explosion, burn**
2. **injury by electric current**
3. **noise**
4. **dust**
5. **vibrations**
6. **radiation**
7. **chemical contamination, infestation**
8. **biological risks**
9. **stress, nervousness (psychic strain)**
10. **physical threat by other person**
11. **other (state what)**

What plays the most important part when you choose employment?

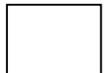
(you may tick off more answers)

1. **financial evaluation**
2. **self-realisation**
3. **pleasant working environment**
4. **safety workplace**
5. **good relations at workplace**
6. **job stability**
7. **professional progress**
8. **generally calm working atmosphere**
9. **other (state what)**



*Which of the following symptoms have you observed lately?
(tick off)*

1. somniphathy
2. memory disorder
3. irritability
4. anxiety, unease
5. stomachache
6. headache
7. indigestion
8. palpitation
9. frequent illness
10. none



What is the importance of the following factors at your choice of occupation?

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| 1. financial evaluation | | | | | | | |
| | <i>very important</i> | x | x | x | x | x | unimportant |
| 2. self-realisation | | | | | | | |
| | <i>very important</i> | x | x | x | x | x | unimportant |
| 3. pleasant working environment | | | | | | | |
| | <i>very important</i> | x | x | x | x | x | unimportant |
| 4. safety workplace | | | | | | | |
| | <i>very important</i> | x | x | x | x | x | unimportant |
| 5. job stability | | | | | | | |
| | <i>very important</i> | x | x | x | x | x | unimportant |
| 6. professional progress | | | | | | | |
| | <i>very important</i> | x | x | x | x | x | unimportant |

7. generally calm working atmosphere

very important x x x x x *unimportant*

8. other (state what)

very important x x x x x *unimportant*

List of respondents:

| | Gender | Age category | Education |
|----|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 2 | male | 1 | basic school education |
| 3 | female | 2 | basic school education |
| 4 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 5 | male | 3 | secondary school education |
| 6 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 7 | male | 4 | skilled operative |
| 8 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 9 | male | 1 | skilled operative |
| 10 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 11 | male | 5 | secondary school education |
| 12 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 13 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 14 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 15 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 16 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 17 | male | 1 | skilled operative |
| 18 | female | 3 | skilled operative |
| 19 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 20 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 21 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 22 | female | 4 | skilled operative |
| 23 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 24 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 25 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 26 | male | 4 | skilled operative |
| 27 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 28 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 29 | male | 3 | university education |
| 30 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 31 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 32 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 33 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 34 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 35 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 36 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 37 | male | 2 | university education |
| 38 | female | 3 | basic school education |
| 39 | male | 4 | skilled operative |
| 40 | female | 3 | basic school education |

| | | | |
|----|--------|---|----------------------------|
| 41 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 42 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 43 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 44 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 45 | female | 4 | university education |
| 46 | female | 2 | university education |
| 47 | female | 5 | secondary school education |
| 48 | male | 4 | university education |
| 49 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 50 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 51 | male | 5 | basic school education |
| 52 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 53 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 54 | female | 2 | university education |
| 55 | female | 4 | skilled operative |
| 56 | male | 3 | university education |
| 57 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 58 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 59 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 60 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 61 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 62 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 63 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 64 | female | 4 | university education |
| 65 | male | 3 | university education |
| 66 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 67 | male | 1 | basic school education |
| 68 | male | 3 | secondary school education |
| 69 | male | 4 | skilled operative |
| 70 | male | 2 | skilled operative |
| 71 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 72 | female | 3 | university education |
| 73 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 74 | male | 4 | skilled operative |
| 75 | female | 5 | basic school education |
| 76 | male | 2 | university education |
| 77 | male | 3 | secondary school education |
| 78 | male | 2 | university education |
| 79 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 80 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 81 | female | 3 | university education |
| 82 | male | 3 | secondary school education |
| 83 | male | 3 | university education |
| 84 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 85 | male | 5 | secondary school education |
| 86 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 87 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 88 | male | 4 | university education |
| 89 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 90 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 91 | male | 2 | university education |
| 92 | male | 4 | university education |
| 93 | female | 2 | secondary school education |

| | | | |
|-----|--------|---|----------------------------|
| 94 | female | 5 | university education |
| 95 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 96 | male | 2 | university education |
| 97 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 98 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 99 | male | 3 | secondary school education |
| 100 | female | 5 | university education |
| 101 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 102 | male | 2 | skilled operative |
| 103 | female | 2 | skilled operative |
| 104 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 105 | female | 1 | skilled operative |
| 106 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 107 | male | 1 | skilled operative |
| 108 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 109 | female | 2 | skilled operative |
| 110 | male | 4 | university education |
| 111 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 112 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 113 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 114 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 115 | female | 4 | university education |
| 116 | male | 4 | university education |
| 117 | male | 2 | skilled operative |
| 118 | male | 1 | skilled operative |
| 119 | male | 4 | university education |
| 120 | female | 1 | university education |
| 121 | male | 2 | skilled operative |
| 123 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 124 | female | 4 | basic school education |
| 125 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 126 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 127 | male | 2 | university education |
| 127 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 128 | female | 4 | university education |
| 129 | male | 3 | university education |
| 130 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 131 | female | 4 | skilled operative |
| 132 | female | 2 | university education |
| 133 | male | 5 | university education |
| 134 | female | 2 | skilled operative |
| 135 | male | 3 | university education |
| 136 | female | 1 | university education |
| 137 | male | 5 | secondary school education |
| 138 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 139 | male | 5 | secondary school education |
| 140 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 141 | male | 1 | secondary school education |
| 142 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 143 | female | 5 | secondary school education |
| 145 | female | 1 | skilled operative |
| 146 | male | 4 | university education |
| 147 | male | 2 | university education |

| | | | |
|-----|--------|---|----------------------------|
| 148 | female | 2 | university education |
| 149 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 150 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 151 | male | 2 | skilled operative |
| 152 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 153 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 154 | female | 1 | secondary school education |
| 155 | female | 2 | university education |
| 156 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 157 | male | 2 | university education |
| 158 | male | 2 | university education |
| 159 | male | 2 | university education |
| 160 | male | 2 | university education |
| 161 | male | 5 | secondary school education |
| 162 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 163 | male | 5 | secondary school education |
| 164 | male | 3 | secondary school education |
| 165 | female | 3 | skilled operative |
| 166 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 167 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 168 | male | 4 | secondary school education |
| 169 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 170 | female | 2 | university education |
| 171 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 172 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 173 | female | 4 | basic school education |
| 174 | female | 3 | secondary school education |
| 175 | female | 4 | university education |
| 176 | female | 2 | secondary school education |
| 178 | male | 2 | secondary school education |
| 177 | female | 4 | secondary school education |
| 178 | male | 3 | skilled operative |
| 179 | female | 5 | secondary school education |
| 180 | male | 4 | skilled operative |

Explanatory text - age categories: 1= 15 – 24

2= 25 – 34

3= 35 – 44

4= 45 – 54

5= 55 – 64



Part 2: Occupational safety and health in Czech Republic

Focus groups interviews

EGO Advertising & Communication

Barvičova 18

602 00 Brno

Czech Republic

In connection to the field exploration and the secondary analyses, the research investigation was realised by FGIs method in order to answer prospective results of the field exploration, and mainly, to define the principle influences exerted on the field of labour and health protection in the Czech Republic. FGIs complete effectively the analysis of public opinion on the investigated issue.

This report and the work it describes were funded by the Health and Safety Executive. Its contents, including any opinions and/or conclusions expressed, are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect HSE policy.

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1. REALISATION

The investigation took place in Brno on 26th April and 2nd May 2001. Two groups, each consisting of eight respondents, satisfied the following selection criteria:

- representatives of company management (3)
- representatives of public institutions (2)
- representatives of companies responsible for labour protection (4)
- a representative of a hygienic station (occupational hygiene department) (1)
- representatives of specialists in labour protection training – lecturers (2)
- representatives of the Labour Protection Institute and the Labour Protection Inspectorate (2+2)

The size of discussion groups was optimum so that all participants could express their opinion on all discussed themes. Both exploration discussions lasted approximately 95 minutes each. All participants were highly competent and strongly involved in the issue of safety operation and health protection at work. The discussions were anonymous, i.e. the participants revealed their own opinions, not their employers' ones. Thanks to that, the discussions and opinions were very frank and productive. The discussions were video recorded. After rewriting the contents of discussions, the recording was liquidated as required by some respondents.

Before the discussions, five individual interviews were made with people who suffered serious occupation accidents. However, they rejected to speak "in public" because of their trauma or reduced mobility. Their attitudes and opinions were used within the discussions. The participation was also rejected by a representative of the Industrial Medicine Institute, University Hospital "U svaté Anny", oriented to occupational diseases, because of his long-term work load.

2. RESULTS PROCESSING

The participants' video recorded opinions were processed by opinion quantification method within individual themes. Then, they were transformed to the final report in the form which did not change the formal contents of individual utterances, i.e. respondents' opinions are presented in their authentic, undistorted form. The final report also integrates the opinions of both discussion groups within individual themes. The most important opinions and pieces of knowledge are summarised at the end of the final report.

3. RESULTS

3. 1. EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR AND HEALTH PROTECTION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The participants agreed in the discussions it could be stated in general that the perception of safety operation and health protection by people in the Czech Republic is not sufficient. There were particularly underlined the interests of companies management to only follow their profit and circumvent safety demands as much as possible. Simultaneously, low motivation of employers as well as employees to solve the labour protection issue was stressed. Further, it was mentioned that entrepreneurs of newly arisen companies are not often informed on their duties pursuant to the effective laws. In this issue, imperfection in legislation was highlighted (*this matter is solved separately in provision 3. 3.*).

It was said several times that the level of labour protection in the year 1989 was better than it is at present. This thesis was supported by the following statements: "In the year 1989 it was in order, there was a three-stage control ...", etc. However, this opinion was not accepted by all participants. It was rather said there were changes for the better in the past five years and subsequently, ones for the worse. This statement was founded on the following claims: inferior

and non-functional legislation, shrinkage in the number of qualified experts caused by the transformation of companies, behaviour of public institutions using only repression, prevention programmes minimisation and the socio-economic situation in which “people reject safety work and employers deal with this issue only marginally ... and do not perceive the risks of employees’ work.”

3. 2. POSITIVE SIGNALS IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR PROTECTION

The participants agreed in the discussions that a very important part in the field of labour protection is played by foreign companies coming to the Czech market and applying so called “higher culture” which is, in the majority of foreign companies, also projected to a more responsible approach to labour protection. Further, the relation between the responsible approach to the labour protection and the introducing of quality systems (e.g. ISO) was pointed out. It was mentioned several times that a number of foreign companies working in the territory of Czech Republic should be taken as an example by other companies. It was also said that the high standard can be firstly seen in foreign companies with a long tradition where the past well-grooved systems have persisted, while the last place is occupied by the companies arisen in the course of past ten years, where the awareness of the necessity to solve responsibly the labour protection issue is missing.

Further positive trends were seen in the increased publishing of special publications concerning the labour and health protection. It was said that “in the past five years more publications appeared than in the past 45 years of the former political system”. The influence of foreign insurance offices, in relation to property insurance and proposals of risk reducing measures, was assessed as positive as well.

3. 3. LEGISLATION

The issue of legislation was opened and ruminated wide during the discussions. Generally, all participants agreed the present-day legislation dealing with the labour protection is very bad in the Czech Republic. Many particular imperfections of the existing code were pointed out. For example, a discrepancy was mentioned between “Chapter V with which we are still dragging” and which is considerably old-fashioned, “with a number of boring terms and contradictions among them” and new articles which are often too “precise and detailed, and so, too much special to be put into practice”.

The following opinions were pronounced as for the issue of legislation: “The present legislation is toothless, which is worse than none. There are gaps in a number of laws. The legislation is exposed to a number of lobby pressures exerted by various professional associations. Lawmakers capable of approving high-quality laws are missing – there are fresh graduates at the ministry who are not often able to work with directives because they lack complex and long-term grasp of the issue. The present Labour Code, or the Public Health Protection Act no. 258 is a pasquinade, as it is not possible to change only a part of it. If an ‘axiom’ is to be changed, it is necessary to realise the change in a complex way. EU directives are grafted on a rotten trunk of our legislation. Civil servants are continuously under the pressure of threat they will pay for their lapses. However, the present legislation does not enable to punish sufficiently the companies which do not deal with the labour protection. A code of higher quality concerning the qualification for work with certain instruments is missing, etc.” As for the Labour Code novelisation, it was said: “The professional public expected the changes carried out competently ... unfortunately, it did not happen.”

Moreover, all negative opinions of the legislation were supported by the criticism of continuous lack of the necessary executive order introducing at least partial functionality in the system (e.g. the missing executive order for the judgement of risks where it is not clear who is a competent person to do so). A great number of participants pointed out a negative influence of politics and politicians exerted on the legislation and it was declared that it would be the best for the labour protection legislation if it could disengage from the influence of politics or from the political influence of trade unions.

Generally, the majority of participants agreed with the integration of public institutions responsible for labour and health protection, i.e. the integration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health. Within this point, it was said: "Currently, there is no co-operation of the ministries". However, as for the form of integration, the participants had different attitudes. While a part of participants asserted a complex integration "as in some EU countries", others pointed out the latest legislative alterations which "make separate politics" of labour protection, and in their opinion, the integration is impossible, especially because of the approach of the Ministry of Health (the part of hygienic stations in labour protection), without a functional system of occupational medicine (perhaps, except danger workplaces). This is also related to the unsolved issue of the accident insurance office.

In conclusion, the majority of participants expressed their hope in case the integration does not take place, "let it function at least".

3. 4. PREVENTION

Prevention was also one of the most discussed themes. The representatives stated the prevention, especially training, is not observed by many companies. The question "when an employee must be acquainted with legal regulations" was discussed, but the rules of safe behaviour at workplace, where elementary matters are often neglected, were not solved.

The opinions on duration and frequency of training were different. Some enforced the opinion that the training might last 2 hours at most, others thought the standard training should last 4-5 hours at least. The participants agreed that the first step to ensure the prevention is to ensure the "standard". They also agreed it is necessary to improve training, to make it more attractive and to explain the labour protection to employees by examples taken from practice. It was highlighted there is a lack of aids and high-quality instructional films of which existence either lecturers are not informed or they are too expensive (e.g. artificial dolls to train resuscitation). It was also pointed out that people are not engaged sufficiently in training and they often have negative attitudes to it. That is why, it is necessary to realise preventive steps in a suitable and motivating way. Thus, the present priority is to explain to employees what contribution the labour protection training has for them. In fact, the general increase in information on the labour protection importance is in question. The repression only impresses those who solve problems and is of less educational extent. Generally, an idea was accepted that "the employees' prevention in labour protection is mainly the matter of motivation. People must understand their personal profit".

3. 5. OCCUPATION ACCIDENTS AND DISEASES

It was pointed out that a great number of occupation accidents has not been registered (especially in building industry) and that employers try to conceal them. Thus, the existing statistical records are considerably skewed.

It was highlighted there is an increasing trend toward psychosomatic and psychic illnesses resulting from the stress increasing in the working environment, the pressure on the performance, the high work load and the lack of time for having a rest existing within the objective causes of impossibility to keep the required time, etc. An opinion was pronounced that the current trend is "to work up to stop". Further, it was said there is a huge gap in the labour protection system consisting in the positions of psychologists dealing with the problems of work hygiene.

There were several controversies in the discussions, for example: "from the medical viewpoint" the psychic factors cannot influence the origin of eczema and skin disorders. This opinion was rejected by others. As for back and spine diseases it was stated these diseases were not entered in the list of occupational diseases because it is so called unspecific disease where it is difficult to prove the influence of work (as opposed to classified disorders resulting from excessive load of small muscular groups, etc.). However, other participants pointed out the expedience not to

rank the back diseases among the occupational diseases because of a great number of workers, e.g. drivers, suffering from these problems. Further, the part of ergonomics was solved (e.g. in case of driver's seat), which is often neglected and even the educational institutions "are not still able to use" this term (the recent replacement of this term with "ergonomics" in mass media was given as an example).

It resulted from the interviews with people who suffered occupation accidents, which were realised before FGIs, that people affected by serious occupation accidents are subsequently approached negatively by public institutions as well as employers and suffer from secondary traumas. There are also inadequate laws to deal with the reintegration of the handicapped in work in case of their lowered working ability. The participants accepted the above pieces of information without comments.

3. 6. THE PART OF EMPLOYERS

As it was said above, the irresponsible approach of companies management and entrepreneurs to the labour protection was declared to be one of the most important factors influencing unfavourably the situation. Except little knowledge of duties resulting from the Labour Code, it was highlighted in this point that the Czech entrepreneurs are not motivated to observe the labour protection rules and the protection is just perceived as "non-productive cost". It was said directly: "The relation of entrepreneurs to the labour protection won't change until there is a financial motivation, e.g. in the form of insurance bonuses in case of small number of accidents. Otherwise, it won't pay off."

The participants agreed that this issue is not solved effectively by the government and no preferential treatment is given to the companies taking care of labour protection. The problem was summarised in the following statement: "We have no positive functional means to support upright companies." In some opinions, the present state suits only to insurance offices.

Further, the matter of repression, control and recourse was discussed. It was stressed that the national apparatus wants qualified workers and the present state of inspectors is unsatisfactory. It was said with no comments that a number of companies evaluate subsequently the influence of control as positive, as only just this act will often help the company representatives to realise the importance of labour protection. The occurrence of accidents and related problems is just a marginal case in detection of the labour protection importance.

Though the opinion prevailed in the discussions that the ignorance of law is no excuse and the entrepreneurs must be informed about their duties – thus, the non-observation of labour protection rules is intentional in the majority of companies – it is true that the approach of governmental bodies to this matter is insufficient as well. For example, the following statement was expressed: "Although the employer wants to keep the requirements defined by the Labour Code, he does not know which institutions to address. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs? The hygiene? The Ministry of Environment?" (*See the aforementioned integration problems.*)

Bad legislation was highlighted again and it was said that company lawyers are often supported by laws better than public institutions responsible for the control of labour protection. Here the participants agreed again it is necessary to create suitable, explicit and hard legislation and to define the responsible institutions without connecting links, if possible (labour courts operating in some EU countries were mentioned as an example).

3. 7. THE PART OF EMPLOYEES

As the main factor causing the low normative importance of labour protection from the employees' standpoint, the absence of one's own health value perception was defined by the participants in the discussions. Of course, this situation is supported by the economic situation of the country, unemployment, etc. Thus, it is not surprising the first question when people get to know that their workplace is marked as dangerous is: "Shall I get some extra money?" The employees' standpoint was summarised by one participant: "People lost their feeling they should protect themselves."

The participants agreed that young people are the least interested in labour protection. Older employees are more engaged in this matter and their perception of their own labour risks is more intensive, frequently with regard to their family obligations and longer experience in labour protection. Further, some participants said to this point: "Young people are not adaptable. People have no legal awareness of their right to work safely. People in all institutions (including public ones) are afraid of pointing out imperfections not to pay dear for it."

3. 8. COMMUNICATION

The participants expressed their spontaneous agreement in an appropriate communication campaign (especially an advertising one) within the enlightenment of safety operation and health protection at work. It was mentioned any time this issue appears in media, people are more engaged in this matter. It was said that the knowledge of labour protection is very poor presently. In the first phase of enlightenment, the participants would prefer the use of media advertisement, particularly television. It would be convenient "to appeal to fear", e.g. by demonstrating consequences of occupation accidents. Further communication means should be used in the following phases when people will be more engaged in this issue, e.g. "hot line" (advisory, free of charge line), particularly dealing with prevention as the most important matter. It was stated in connection to the aforesaid "if the labour protection does not become a 'media theme', people will be always afraid to point out the problems."

3. 9. OTHER OPINIONS

The participants did not agree in the part of company physicians. Some of them enforced the opinion that every employee should have a free choice of his/her general practitioner.

It was also said that companies (except a few of them) do not want to take part in the labour protection projects, e.g. the "Safe Company".

Further, it was stated that a significant percent of people responsible for labour protection were recruited from the former personnel officers and are still amateurs. This fact results from the past political system.

A piece of experience was expressed that "the need of lifelong education is not perceived in the Czech Republic. For example, labour protection inspectors are not examined regularly and they retire with their certificates acquired at the age of 26.

Discussing the legislation, one participant reminded of the fact it is not possible to implement all EU systems in the Czech Republic, because "we have a written law, while the Anglo-Saxons have a common law. We must go our own way ... and build on the written law legislation".

Another participant formulated the following statement: "The labour protection lecturers are affected by pressure from two sides, i.e. from the side of present legislation and EU directives. No wonder then, nor the lecturers know what to do."

In relation to the occupation accidents it was said there is a certain group of people, “gamblers”, who want to risk because of their nature. It is necessary to create better diagnostic methods to exclude those people of working process and to eliminate possible harm of responsible employees.

4. SUMMARY

The research inquiry by FGIs method has brought the following most important standpoints and opinions of competent participants in the field of labour and health protection:

- The labour and health protection is not perceived by people in the Czech Republic with sufficient intensity.
- The very important part in the field of labour protection is played by foreign companies coming to the Czech market and applying so called “higher culture” which is, in the majority of foreign companies, also projected to a more responsible approach to labour protection.
- The current level of legislation dealing with the labour protection is very low in the Czech Republic.
- It is necessary to start extensive integration of public institutions dealing with labour protection.
- Within the prevention, it is necessary to motivate the employees more so that they can understand their personal profit.
- It is supposed that a great number of occupation accidents are not officially registered in the Czech Republic.
- The health protection systems are not adapted to the increasing psychosomatic problems often related to the work load.
- The approach of Czech employers to the labour protection is not responsible enough.
- The positive motivation is missing for the companies to solve the labour protection issues in a more responsible way.
- The perception of one’s own health value is very low in case of employees.
- It is necessary to promote the issue, especially by means of advertisement and Public Relations.

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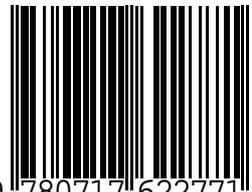
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