



IALI Forum

*The newsletter of the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI)
Bulletin d'Information de l'Association Internationale de l'Inspection du Travail (AIIT)*

Making our voice heard

Every year, more people lose their lives worldwide due to occupational diseases and accidents than through traffic accidents, wars and crime. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates the number of fatalities at work at 1.2 million people per year. That means about 3000 daily, or two deaths in the time it takes you to read this article.

Four per cent of the world's gross national product (GNP) is lost each year due to poor working conditions, accidents, occupational diseases etc. This unacceptable total is many times what is paid in aid to the developing countries.

Changing methods of production, globalisation, outsourcing, the splitting of large enterprises and the expansion of the service sector are leading to more complex working processes, new forms of organisation and management and new factors such as stress, mental disorders, musculoskeletal problems etc. The fragmentation of the labour market, the meteoric growth in new technologies, the rise in illegal employment, child labour and subcontracting and the various forms of black economy, plus the weakening of the trades unions, are having dramatic effects on occupational health and safety worldwide.

Government labour inspectorates must therefore find new strategic answers to the global challenges. These include new preventive strategies by labour inspectorates, the promotion of social dialogue with a view to shaping an innovative, socially aware future for work and enhancing the skills and efficiency of the labour inspectors

themselves. State supervision can no longer be exercised only in a controlling way. Instead, the state must also be a player, challenging and creating dynamism. It must promote initiative and activity on the part of management and labour and motivate them to take responsibility for their actions. And its control, supervision and advice must lead to better prevention of accidents and occupational diseases.

In the past decade, labour inspection systems have developed many new strategic approaches, reforms and programmes worldwide in co-operation with IALI. Many of these have been implemented, though certainly not uniformly in all countries. This increases the importance of the pooling of information and experience which IALI, as the professional organisation of labour inspectors from every corner of the earth, can offer its colleagues. The symposia in Malawi and Croatia (see page 2) and the workshop in Argentina have produced excellent results for the worldwide exchange of information in the fields of health and safety in agriculture, on building sites and with all forms of illegal employment.

Child labour is a global problem not only in developing countries, but increasingly in industrialised nations. IALI will work intensively to deal with this problem and, with its Dutch colleagues, is planning an international symposium on child labour in February 2002 in the Netherlands. The wall of silence must be broken, since these children often have no childhood, no training and no future.

Very soon, IALI is staging an international workshop on the theme of health and safety management and labour inspection in Düsseldorf, Germany from 14 to 16 May 2001, jointly with the ILO and other partners, at the International Conference on Health, Safety and Occupational Medicine. Labour inspectors from all corners of the globe will be participating in this important event, and we look forward to seeing many of our members there and sharing our experiences.

The future can only be shaped with people. Not only their commitment, knowledge and abilities, but particularly their health and safety, are essential. Dear friends, please support IALI actively with your experiences and contributions, to make its voice heard throughout the world in the interest of better collective working conditions and better health and safety for thousands of millions of people.



*Gerd Albracht, IALI President
Wiesbaden, Germany*

Malawi 13-15 December 1999

Participants from 13 East and South African countries attended this high-level IALI/International Labour Organisation symposium. The Government of Malawi hosted the event at a conference facility at Mangochi, Lake Malawi.



The symposium was opened by Hon Lilian Patel (MP, Malawi), Mr Martin Mononga (Principal Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Malawi), Mr Wolfgang von Richthofen (Conference Director, ILO) and Mr Gerd Albracht (President of IALI).

The symposium provided an opportunity for labour inspectors and representatives of employer and employee organisations to share their experiences of the challenges of accident prevention in agriculture.

During workshop sessions, participants considered new prevention strategies, policies, programmes and partnerships for rural/agricultural workplaces. The conclusions were then used to reach a consensus on the way forward in this challenging industry. This was based on a set of major objectives:

- for countries to extend inspection and law enforcement to cover the agriculture industry;
- for labour inspectorates fundamentally to review their structures in order to make effective use of resources (integrating labour and health and safety inspection functions);
- for inspectorates to develop specific, prioritised plans of work for the agriculture industry; and

- to develop a partnership approach, involving labour inspectorates, social partners and other organisations involved in agriculture.

The success of the symposium was helped by the enthusiasm and commitment of the host, Malawi, which was also the first country in the region to become a member of IALI.



The symposium brought together participants from 13 East and South African countries

Croatia 8-10 May 2000

More than 100 participants from 20 countries attended this successful conference.

The event was held at Cavtat, near Dubrovnik, and was ably hosted by the country's Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

The main themes of the conference were integrating health and safety priorities in agriculture, construction and illegal employment – all themes of worldwide relevance and importance.

The key points under discussion included:

- **construction:**
 - good health and safety standards need to be incorporated at the tendering and design stages, both for processes and for products;
 - a lack of knowledge of standards among contractors and sub-

contractors was a persistent problem;

- the need to manage contractors and subcontractors was also crucial;
- method statements and risk criteria needed to be established;
- **agriculture:**
 - the difficulties associated with persuading farmers in a depressed industry were acknowledged;
 - novel approaches were now being tried by labour inspectorates in efforts to get information across to small farms in particular;
 - a lack of independence of state inspectorates sometimes created difficulties; and
 - manufacturers and suppliers of agricultural machinery and other equipment should consider how to make their products safer for use by farmworkers (EN and ISO standards should help here).

Illegal employment presents challenges both for developed and underdeveloped countries. On this subject and more generally, there was strong recognition of the importance of labour inspectorates working together and the role of IALI in assisting this process.



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Managing occupational safety and health The Polish experience



The Polish Labour Inspectorate (PIP) has developed different preventive activities to increase its operational effectiveness, in addition to its routine tasks. Over recent years, PIP has tried to promote a preventive approach to occupational safety and health (OSH) at enterprise level, compatible with European practice.

Three years ago, PIP and the Central Institute for Labour Protection agreed a joint programme to implement OSH management systems. The programme comprised:

- gradual training for all labour inspectors;
- promotion of OSH management, particularly in high hazard industries; and
- training for technical staff and trades union representatives from selected companies.

The Inspectorate may exclude those companies which obtain measurable improvements in safety performance through successful OSH management systems from routine supervision for a limited period of time. With assistance from foreign consultants, PIP has also been involved in the EU 'Phare' project entitled 'Safety Management System – Competition' for over a year. Companies from the construction and woodworking industries in Poland's five regions took part.

Key outcomes of the above activities have been:

- OSH management systems are now better recognised throughout industry as a powerful tool for improving

health and safety at work;

- a number of enterprises are now implementing proactive, risk assessment-based OSH management systems;
- a core group of PIP inspectors understand the process, working closely with and supporting enterprises in applying modern OSH management practices; and
- PIP has made Polish industry recognise that a participative approach – involving management, employees and PIP – can help achieve positive results.

This and other projects demonstrate an additional role for an enforcement agency, namely as a catalyst for necessary change for the better.

More information can be found on the Internet (www.pip.gov.pl).



Strengthening working relationships with partners to meet future challenges The Spanish experience



Last year, the Professional Association of Spanish Labour and Social Security Inspectors organised some workshops at Santa Ponca-Calvià (Majorca, Balearic Islands) with a wide programme of contributions and discussions.

The technical content was most interesting since the workshops were open to a variety of participants. The meeting was not just for Association members – other experts in workplace safety organisations were also welcomed, as were representatives of social services.

During the two days of the event, papers were given followed by questions and discussion of any controversial points. Speakers included university professors, doctors, labour and social security inspectors and others.

The subjects covered included:

- the division of effort and relations between the Labour Authority and the Labour Inspectorate, with special emphasis on the latter's role;
- the foreseeable development of the Inspectorate in the context of labour relations;
- problems relating to health monitoring of employees, medical check-ups and rights to privacy;
- the structure of outsourced working;
- relations with other labour inspectorates in EU countries;
- the role of inspectorates in resolving labour conflicts;
- standardising inspection strategies for the prevention of occupational risks;
- problems with the most recent legal provisions imposed in connection with the 1997 Labour Inspection Act; and

- appearing as experts and witnesses in labour and criminal proceedings in relation to the function of inspectors, etc.

According to those outside the organisation, the conference was a great success, and due credit must be given to the various subsidies received from both government and the private sector.

As the list of subjects on the agenda was not nearly exhausted, there are definite plans to hold a similar meeting, in Galicia or elsewhere among the numerous attractions of the peninsula or islands, during the last months of 2001 or in Spring 2002. As envisaged by the Board of Directors of the Association, members of other labour inspectorates could be invited where they could have an interest in the subjects to be proposed by the organisation in due course.



Does labour inspection work? The British experience



IALI members are all involved in programmes of work designed to promote compliance with the law and, ultimately, to prevent accidents and ill health in the workplace. But do you know how effective your programmes are as a whole, or the relative contribution of the component parts?

The British Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is currently trying to demonstrate, through a major research project, that inspection works. This project is being managed by HSE's Field Operations Directorate, which is headed by Dr Adrian Ellis (Secretary General of IALI). The project has four stages:

- A review of all studies within HSE over the last 20 years about the effectiveness of inspection activities. There is evidence that overall improvements in safety

have been achieved in particular circumstances as a result of inspection or other regulatory activities. However, it has not been possible to prove a clear link to the effectiveness of inspection activities as distinct from publicity, changes in law, improvements initiated by social partners, etc.

- A review of any international reports on effectiveness studies in the field of health and safety or other types of regulation (such as pollution). These studies all showed some positive effects, but were often poorly validated with evidence.
- A research project which is currently under way to develop performance indicators which could be used to try to measure the effect of inspection, investigation and enforcement. This is due to report in April 2001.

- Finally, a recent large-scale initiative, involving inspections of about 4000 workplaces with high noise levels. This initiative has tested out the relative effectiveness of different approaches by inspectors, such as surprise visits compared to pre-planned ones, and giving advice compared to taking enforcement action. It is also hoped to be able to measure objectively the overall improvements achieved as a result of the initiative, which are still being evaluated.

There are plans to hold a one-day conference later this year to discuss this work and other similar projects.

For further information, please contact Mike Cosman, Head of Operations, HSE, Inter City House, Mitchell Lane, Bristol BS1 6AN, UK (tel: +44 1179 886095, e-mail mike.cosman@hse.gsi.gov.uk).

Dates for your diary Future IALI conferences

Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems and Labour Inspection
Düsseldorf, Germany,
14-16 May 2001

The objectives of this conference are to introduce the International Labour Organisation's newly adopted Technical Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems, to consider national policies and concepts on this subject, and to discuss the involvement and contribution of labour inspection services to the establishment of good practice.

The conference is being sponsored jointly by the ILO, IALI, the Norwegian Government and several organisations in Germany. It will run concurrently with the A+A Congress and Exhibition at Messe Düsseldorf centre.

Further enquiries about this event should be addressed to Mr Nils-Petter Wedege, International Labour Office, Geneva (e-mail: wedege@ilo.org or fax: +41.22.7.99.6878).

Abolishing the Worst Forms of Child Labour
Netherlands,
25-27 February 2002

This conference is timed to coincide with the first anniversary of the adoption of ILO Convention 182 on abolishing the worst forms of child labour (Geneva, November 1999).

The objectives of the conference will be to encourage the exchange of experience and knowledge of labour inspectorates in this important area and to strengthen their role and effectiveness in helping national governments meet the aims of Convention 182. The conference will be sponsored by IALI and the Department of International Affairs and the Labour Inspectorate, Netherlands.

For further details about the conference, please contact Mr Joost Cuijpers (e-mail: Jcuijpers@minszw.nl) or the IALI secretariat.

General Congress and General Assembly
Geneva,
17-19 June 2002

It is planned to hold the next triennial IALI Congress and Assembly on the above dates. Further information about themes will be announced in due course. Both the Congress and the Assembly will be open to all IALI members, and simultaneous interpretation will be available.



Meet your Executive Committee

At the General Assembly meeting in Geneva back in June 1999, the following people were elected as members of the IALI Executive Committee:



President
Gerd Albracht, Germany



Vice President/Secretary General
Adrian Ellis, UK



Vice President/Treasurer
Michel Gisler, Switzerland



Vice President
András Békes, Hungary



Vice President
César A Guedeja Marrón de Onís, Spain



Vice President
Nils-Petter Wedege, Norway



Vice President
Chaker Sahli, Tunisia



Technical Adviser
David Eves, UK



Secretariat
Malcolm Gifford, UK

Welcome to IALI

Since the last edition of *IALI Forum*, the membership of the Association has grown to 78. We are delighted to have been able to welcome the following new members:

Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Formación de Recursos Humanos	Argentina
General Labour Inspectorate	Bulgaria
Administration de l'hygiène et de la médecine du travail	Belgium
Ministry of Labour, Ontario	Canada
Association of Labour Inspection Specialists	Egypt
Sächsisches Staatministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit	Germany
Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland	United Kingdom



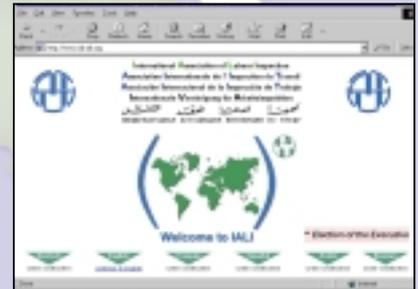
Visit the IALI website today!

Did you know that IALI now has its own website?

The website was launched in 1999; its address is <http://www.iali-aiit.org>. It explains what IALI is and what it does, future events and how to apply for membership. At present, information is available in English only, but other language versions will be available soon.

As the website develops, we hope that it will become a valuable source of information to all members by providing up-to-date information and by allowing the exchange of good ideas and best practice between members. We also hope to establish links with other international websites on workplace health and safety in due course.

So why not pay us a visit?



Changing the statutes

Last year, the IALI statutes were amended slightly. The effect of this has been to remove the right to vote from any non-paying members, although allowances will be made for those members who are genuinely unable to pay subscriptions.

The Executive Committee is able to give 'associate member' status to any member who has made an application in case of genuine financial difficulty, and such members will continue to receive all the technical services of IALI. The Executive Committee is in the process of drawing up criteria for considering applications for associate status.



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New arrangements for IALI secretariat

We have decided to combine the administrative and technical secretariat arrangements on a trial basis. In Autumn 2000, the secretariat was transferred to the Health and Safety Executive's operational headquarters in Liverpool, UK. It is headed by IALI's Secretary General, Adrian Ellis, supported by Malcolm Gifford.

Queries about membership, future events, the website or other information about IALI should in the first instance be addressed to Malcolm Gifford (see left for contact details).