



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)

Membership of the IALI Executive Committee

The Executive Committee meets formally once or twice a year to discuss the business of the Association, including membership issues, finances, conferences, the website and other administrative matters. Once every 3 years, all IALI members have the opportunity to discuss IALI's business at its General Assembly, the next one being in June 2005 (more information is given above).

At its last meeting in June 2004, the Executive Committee discussed the issue of membership of the Committee. The current rules are that:

"Nominations and candidature for membership of the Executive

Committee are restricted to those nominated representatives of members in good standing, who have duly paid their membership fees" (IALI Statutes Article 6g)

The Committee believes that these rules should stay the same, which is consistent with IALI policy that our business should be in the hands of those full members who have paid their fees. However, the Statutes do allow that those facing genuine difficulties in paying fees can become Associate Members; they can receive IALI's technical services but are unable to vote. You will also recall that there was strong member support for increasing

the number of Associate Members (see IALI Forum, September 2003 edition, front page).

However, the Executive Committee also wanted to consult IALI members on whether Associate members should also be entitled to serve on the Committee, which they cannot do at present. Any changes would of course mean a change to our Statutes, which would be discussed at our General Assembly in June 2005.

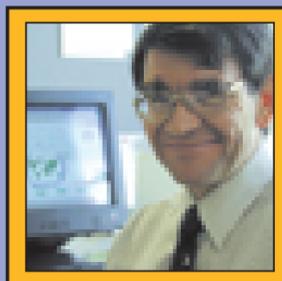
Please consider the matter and send your views to Malcolm Gifford, IALI Secretariat, no later than 31 December 2004.

SECRETARIAT

Malcolm Gifford manages the secretariat and is also the Editor of IALI Forum. If you have contributions for, or questions about the newsletter, please do contact him.

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All membership issues (for new and existing members) are handled by Mr Joost Cuijpers in the Dutch Labour Inspectorate. All queries about new membership should therefore be addressed to his new addresses which is:

Mr Joost Cuijpers
Arbeidsinspectie
Prinses Beatrixlaan 82
PO Box 11563
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tel. +31.70.304.4509
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The IALI Treasurer, Michel Gisler, and his secretary, Mrs Charlotte Belottini, deal with all financial matters. Their office has recently moved and their new address is:

IALI Treasurer
c/o OCIRT,
35, Rue des Noirettes,
Case Postale 1255
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DO VISIT OUR WEBSITE! – www.iali-aiit.org

If you would like more information about any of the articles contained in this edition of the Forum, please contact either the authors of the articles or the Editor. Further information about contact details of all IALI members is given on the IALI website.

Continuing International Co-operation

I am delighted to welcome you again to this edition of IALI Forum newsletter, the third since our last General Assembly when you elected the current Executive Committee into office. A particular welcome to our new members who have joined the Association since the last edition of our newsletter.

We have much to tell you about since our last edition, all of which has furthered the core purpose of IALI to provide support to all our members in developing the professionalism of labour inspectors across the world. I would also like to thank all our members who have taken the time and trouble to contribute to this newsletter.

During the past year, we have held two highly successful conferences. In September 2003 we met in Borovitz, Bulgaria to share experiences about the integration of labour inspection functions, effectiveness and training, and were assisted greatly in this by the International Labour Office and our colleagues in Bulgaria. A full report on those proceedings is now available from the ILO. The second conference was held in Dublin, Ireland, in May 2004 during the Irish Presidency of the European Union, with generous sponsorship from the European Commission and much help from our

Irish colleagues. This time the topic was chemicals and carcinogens, a topic chosen by those of our members who have recently joined the EU.

Meanwhile, our plans are well advanced for our first ever conference in Asia, in Macao- China, from 20 – 22 September 2004, where the theme will be construction safety. I hope to see many of you at this important event, to consider what to almost all of our members is a major source of accidents at work.

In last year's Forum, I mentioned that following your encouragement at the General Assembly in 2002, we had asked 3 of our Vice Presidents to try out new arrangements for Regional Delegates, so as to ensure that IALI remains relevant to the priorities in all parts of the world. András Békés (for Central and Eastern Europe), Michele Patterson (for Australasia and SE Asia) and Sammy Nyambari (for English-speaking African Countries) are taking this forward with the countries in their respective regions. One early development of this is a conference for all our members, in particular those in Africa, in Mauritius in November. Further details are given in the following pages.

Finally, we are now planning for our next triennial Congress and General



Adrian Ellis, IALI President

Assembly, to be held in Geneva from 13-15 June 2005 during the main ILO Conference. I particularly want the themes of our Congress to be those that you, our members, want to hear and to discuss. But that needs you to tell us which topics there are! So please spend just a few minutes considering this and then e-mailing our hard-working secretary Malcolm Gifford (gifford@ilo.org) with your suggestions, and also your views on any aspect of our activities.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Adrian Ellis
President, IALI

A very warm welcome to our new members!

We want to extend a warm welcome to the following new members since September 2003:

- El Sindicato de Inspectores de Trabajo de Peru,
- The Labour Inspection Department of Iran,
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Russian Federation,
- The State Labour Inspection of Kyrgyz,
- The Department of Labour Protection and Welfare of Thailand,
- L'association des inspecteurs et contrôleurs du travail de Mauritanie.

Full details of these members, their contact addresses etc, can be found on our website – www.iali-aiit.org.

FOCUS ON CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been much in the public eye in recent months, as ten of them joined the European Union in May 2004; other countries in the region may join at a later date. Such political changes inevitably bring fresh challenges to our members in the

region, as social and labour legislation is revised and new ways of working are adopted. At the same time, the IALI Executive Committee appointed András Békés, Director-General of the Hungarian labour Inspectorate, to act as a Regional Delegate for Central and Eastern Europe, to promote interest in

the work of IALI amongst member and non-member countries in the region.

The following articles show some of the interesting programmes and initiatives that are already taking place in Central and Eastern Europe....

Poland: systemic approaches to promoting health and safety at work

- Karolina Głowczyńska-Woelke and Paweł Rozowski, Chief Labour Inspectorate, Poland

■ Promoting OSH management systems...

Poland has been active in promoting systematic approaches to managing occupational safety and health (OSH) and, as part of the process of EU accession, has adopted European legislation such as the "Framework Directive", which includes such approaches. Experience has shown that working conditions improve significantly when establishments adopt such measures, reducing high social and economic costs of poor safety and working standards.

Since 1997, the Polish National Labour Inspectorate has undertaken several national initiatives to promote OSH management systems, such as the EVISA programme, implemented in cooperation with Det Norske Veritas, Norway. This developed a new strategy

for work safety management. From 1998 to 2003 and in cooperation with the National Research Institute, the Inspectorate carried out a series of Safety Management Implementation Programmes based mainly on Polish Standards for OSH management systems and related guidelines. In 1999, with assistance from the EU, a competition was launched entitled "Occupational Health and Safety Management" to encourage Polish establishments to implement modern solutions regarding systemic organisation of work. The competition covered the construction and woodworking sectors, where accident rates are high.

Special groups of labour inspectors advise establishments on implementing OSH management systems, carrying out joint internal audits and

participating in audits for certification purposes. In evaluating the operation and effectiveness of such systems, inspectors do so both directly and in cooperation with employers' organisations, trade unions and OSH experts.

■ Promoting OSH management systems and specifically in the Construction sector

In 2004, the Labour Inspectorate is taking part in the European "Build safely" campaign in addition to the usual inspection programme for the Construction sector. This is an information and prevention campaign that focuses on a programme of OSH assessments carried out by employers. Employers taking part in the programme receive a package of reference materials that enable them to identify and eliminate OSH risks and irregularities in their establishments. Inspectors provide professional advice and support throughout the year, and will be evaluating the results of the programme at their final audits.

Safe and healthy working practices in construction are also promoted through the Inspectorate's publications and training courses, during meetings with representatives of trade unions and employers' organisations, and at seminars, fairs or picnics. The publications are available through professional periodicals and other national and regional channels, and can be accessed via the Labour Inspectorate's web-site at www.pip.gov.pl



Shipbuilding in Gdansk; copyright ILO/Maillard

The conference was organised by the International Labour Office jointly with the General Labour Inspectorate in Bulgaria and in cooperation with IALI. The event provided an opportunity to build on the results of an earlier project on integrated labour inspection

in Bulgaria, and to inspire other countries to initiate similar reforms. A total of 81 delegates from 18 countries attended the conference. Eleven TV and radio stations reported on the event, naming the project a "lighthouse project" that provided

good examples and best practices for labour inspectorates worldwide. The conference report can be downloaded from the ILO's SafeWork website (www.ilo.org/english/protection/safework) or IALI's (www.iali-aiit.org).

Conference "Labour Inspection and chemicals and carcinogens", Dublin, Ireland, 17-18 May 2004.

This was a joint venture between the Norwegian Labour Inspectorate, the Health and Safety Authority in Ireland and IALI, with sponsorship from the European Union. The main purpose of the conference was to discuss strategies to reduce risks from chemicals and carcinogens in the workplace and how those strategies could work in practice. Presentations were given on the role of epidemiology in this context and proposed strategies for reducing chemical risks to the environment as well as practical ways of tackling such risks, including

simplified approaches for firms without access to experts.

Over 70 delegates from 22 countries participated in the event, with a particularly high representation from IALI members in the recently enlarged European Union. Representatives from Vietnam, North Africa and the Middle East also attended. The conference report will be available shortly from the IALI website (www.iali-aiit.org).



Mr. Micheal Henry, HSA, Mrs. Mary Hanafin, Minister, Dr. Adrian Ellis, IALI, Mr. Nils-Petter Wedege, IALI

Diary Dates Diary Dates Diary Dates

■ "Safety and Health in the Construction sector" – Macao-China, 20-22 September 2004. An international conference organised by the Labour and Employment Bureau, Macao SAR, China, and IALI in cooperation with the ILO. Further information may be obtained from the conference website, www.ialiconf2004macao.com

■ "Strategies for occupational health and safety in the 21st century: the role of labour inspectorates" – Mauritius, 22-24 November 2004. An international conference organised jointly by the African Regional Labour Administration Centre and IALI in cooperation with the ILO. Further information will be available shortly on the IALI website.

■ "Challenges and future strategies for labour inspection" – a half-day IALI workshop to be held during the 6th World Congress on Work Injuries Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation, Rome, from 30 November – 3 December 2004. More details to be announced in due course.

IALI Congress and General Assembly 2005

The provisional dates of the next IALI triennial Congress and General Assembly are from 13-15 June 2005. The Congress will take place on the first 2 days and the following themes have been agreed:

Day 1 – general conditions of employment, migrant workers, HIV/AIDS, child labour etc, and the role of labour inspectors in securing good standards,

Day 2 – occupational safety and health, and the role of labour inspectors in the setting of national priorities and securing good standards, including the ILO Global Strategy for Occupational Safety and Health (see article on page 9).

The General Assembly is scheduled to take place on the 15 June and will deal with the Association's business issues.

These are important events in the life of the Association and all members are warmly invited to attend. To facilitate attendance, the events have been timed so as to coincide with the ILO annual conference in Geneva from 31 May to 16 June 2005.

If there are any topics which you would particularly like to see included in either the Congress or the General Assembly, please contact e-mail: charlotte.belottini@etat.ge.ch

ILO NEWS

Health and safety as a cornerstone for Corporate Social Responsibility

-Bernd Treichel, Labour Inspection Specialist, ILO SafeWork

The ILO recently launched a new initiative to link OSH with an important international trend to improve both OSH standards and the quality of production systems of suppliers of multi-national enterprises. This initiative took off last year at an ILO conference on OSH and supply chain management, jointly organized with major German electricity company, RWE, and the UN Global Compact office in New York. The conference confirmed that OSH was a key consideration for Corporate Social Responsibility and also highlighted that clear strategies on improving OSH can contribute significantly to the UN Global Compact agenda and to worldwide poverty reduction. Although much needs to be done to reach out to smaller firms, globalization

offers immense opportunities for the promotion of a worldwide health and safety culture via Corporate Social Responsibility.

A specific programme arising from this initiative is that of the car manufacturer Volkswagen, already a member of the Global Compact. VW has begun an interregional project jointly with the ILO and the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation, GTZ, to ensure that their suppliers have proper OSH systems in place. VW will provide guidance to their suppliers on how to improve health and safety in goods and services supplied as well as on quality control, guidance that will be given by teams of labour inspectors, VW and international experts. Follow-up action will ensure that suppliers adjust their standards to the relatively

high standards of VW as well as national legal requirements. The teams' findings and recommendations will be publicised in an internet-based information system so that other small and medium sized enterprises outside the VW supply chain, but dealing with the same risks, can also benefit.



PAST AND FUTURE CONFERENCES

Conference "Integrating Labour Inspection Functions, Effectiveness, and Training", Borovetz, Bulgaria, 21-23 September 2003.

21.09.03 Opening Ceremony and Welcome/ Presentations: Training for Integrated Labour Inspection & Training Models in Western Inspection Systems. Session chaired by Mr. Gerd Albracht, Senior Specialist in Occupational Safety and Health, SafeWork, ILO, Switzerland.

From left to right:

Dr. Jukka Takala, ILO;
Dr. Adrian Ellis, IALI;
Ms. Christina Christova, Bulgaria;

Mr. Gerd Albracht, ILO;
Prof. Friedrich Buttler, ILO;
Mr. Elmar Timpe, Germany;
Mr. Vladimir Varov, Russia.



FOCUS ON CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The Czech Republic's "Safe Enterprise" programme

- Ing. Jaromír Elbel, President, Czech Occupational Safety Office

The Safe Enterprise programme is a preventative approach that has been developed by the Czech Occupational Safety Office, to improve the management of occupational safety and health (OSH) in enterprises across the country.

The programme is based on the ILO's "Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems" (2001) as well as other management system standards and the Czech Republic's own National Handbook for OSH management systems. However, the programme provides a more comprehensive approach than those contained in the standards, in that it also deals with issues such as fire safety, handling dangerous substances and health care, and it takes into

consideration the new EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work with its emphasis on the need to improve "well-being" at work.

In the Czech Republic, employers are not legally required to have OSH management systems. The Safe Enterprise programme is a systematic approach to help employers comply with their obligations under OSH law. Employers can be awarded Safe Enterprise certificates. The Labour Inspectorate consults with organisations applying for certificates, advising them on how to meet the programme's requirements. Certificates are awarded twice a year by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs at a special ceremony. The certificates

are valid for three years, during which time the Labour Inspectorate carries out annual random inspections in order to verify whether the stipulated conditions are still being observed.

The main benefit of the programme, however, is not the large number of certificates actually issued, but rather the fact that the programme is changing OSH management culture in many organizations, a change that has been achieved through voluntary means rather than new legal obligations. The Czech Occupational Safety Office will continue to refine the programme in the light of experience and new OSH trends, in order to bring more and greater benefits to organizations in future.

Bulgaria - a national campaign on safety and health in the milk-processing industry

- Totyu Mladenov, Director, General Labour Inspectorate, Bulgaria

A national campaign on occupational safety and health (OSH) in the milk-processing industry in Bulgaria took place in April 2004. The campaign's aim was to determine the levels of compliance with national OSH legislation implementing European Directives. 344 enterprises were visited. During the campaign inspectors gave advice about the requirements of European Directives.

Considerable progress was found regarding enterprises' internal organization for OSH, and in most of them risk assessments had been carried out and working conditions committees and groups had been set up. Most of the enterprises had signed service contracts with Occupational Medical Services, although there were some lapses in the quality and the efficiency of these services. Emphasis was also placed on the safety of high-risk equipment (ammonia refrigeration

systems, steam generators, machinery etc) and 44 items of machinery and other equipment were considered to be dangerous and were banned from use. To rectify all violations of the law, a total of 3,116 obligatory instructions were issued, many of which were acted

upon during the inspections. Examples of good practice were found in many enterprises, and the Labour Inspectorate will publicize these experiences in due course.



Milkprocessing plant, Bulgaria

SPOTLIGHT ON CHILD LABOUR

The subject of hazardous child labour was highlighted in the 2002 edition of the Forum, and since then several

labour inspectorates have started to take up the challenges of dealing with the issue more proactively. Several

IALI members are now running training courses for their inspectors - one of these is described below...

Albania – training of labour inspectors on child labour issues

- Shkelqesa Manaj, Chief of Child Labour Unit, Albania

For the last 3 years, the Child Labour Unit (CLU) in Albania and its partners have been organising training courses

for labour inspectors in order to strengthen their roles in the battle against child labour. Training has been

provided on a wide range of relevant topics, including the basic information about child labour, methods of identifying, monitoring and combating it, diagnostic and interviewing skills and knowledge of relevant ILO Conventions and national legislation. So far, training has been concentrated in Tirana, but training for inspectors elsewhere in Albania has already begun. The effects of the training are being evaluated by the CLU.

Other partners involved in combating child labour also take part in this training - Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, of Education and of Public Order, the Institute of Pedagogical Studies and Non-Governmental Organizations. These events provide a great opportunity for consultation on child labour inspection issues. The next step will be to create multi-disciplinary inspection teams.



'World Day Against Child Labour, 12 June 2004. Mr Engjell Bejtaj, Albanian Minister of Labour and Social Affairs presenting the Albanian Flag against Child labour to Mr Frans Roselaars, Director of ILO-IPEC'.

Make use of the IALI child labour helpdesk!

The subject of child labour continues to be an important issue in many countries, as is the role of labour inspectors in helping to combat it - whether through monitoring or assessing situations in which children are working or taking formal enforcement action. We want to support our members who are engaged in this task, and to that end we launched our child labour helpdesk in 2003 (see IALI Forum, September 2003 edition). The aim of the helpdesk is to assist IALI members by searching for different kinds of mutual support that may be available on the subject, and acting as a point of information

exchange, eg on strategies for tackling child labour that have been shown to be successful. Exchange of such experiences is essential for a universal approach in the combating of child labour.

Use of the child labour helpdesk itself is free of charge to IALI members, but if further assistance is required, such as in writing or participating in training courses, the expenses of persons involved will need to be covered.

Whether you, our members, have already gained valuable experience in this area that could assist others, or whether you are looking for some

advice and/or support, please make contact with the helpdesk by simply getting in touch with:

Mr Jacques van der Pols, Arbeidsinspectie
Postbus 9018
6800 DX Arnhem
Janspoort 2
The Netherlands
Tel. +31.26.355.7111
Fax. +31.26.442.4046
E-mail: jvdps@minszw.nl

The child labour helpdesk and its accompanying request form can be accessed via the IALI website on www.iali-aiit.org/english/child.html

ILO NEWS



Promoting occupational safety and health globally



The ILO has recently published a report entitled "Promotional framework for occupational safety and health", as a follow-up to the positive discussion on the subject at the International Labour Conference in June 2003. That Conference gave strong support for better promotion of OSH standards globally.

IALI members will be interested in the report's discussion about state-of-the-art national OSH programmes and systems, and about important

concepts like safety culture and OSH management systems. Although many countries have tried to promote positive safety cultures and management systems (as previous articles in this edition of the Forum show), much more needs to be done globally to move towards preventative approaches. One chapter in the report deals with national programmes and what they might look like in practice, the need for high-level government commitment, targets etc. Labour

inspectorates have a key role here of course. There is also a useful overview (Annex 1) of recent national OSH programmes and strategies in 15 countries from around the world, providing models for other countries to follow.

The report is available at www.ilo.org/public/english/standard/realm/ilc/ilc93/pdf/rep-iv-1.pdf. Hard copy reports are also available in English, French and Spanish.

What is "safety and health culture"?

Malcolm Gifford, ILO SafeWork

The concept of 'safety culture' became more widely used after 1991, following a report on the Chernobyl accident. Several more recent inquiries into major industrial disasters have also considered the idea, pinpointing weaknesses in safety culture rather than the absence of policies and procedures as the main reason for poor safety performance.

Safety culture has been variously defined over the last 10 years. One definition was "the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competences and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organisation's health and safety management" (UK, 1993). Clearly safety culture includes health too. More recently, the concept has been seen in the context of society as a whole, not just 'at work'. A positive safety culture has been defined as "a shared set of beliefs, attitudes, values

and ways of behaving that support the prevention of injury" (New Zealand, 2003).

Encouraging a strong safety and health culture at work is important since, if it is weak, safety and health policies and management systems will be much less effective. Many enterprises have apparently good policies and management systems, but serious accidents happen because people cut corners on safety and health, and they do that because of overriding business pressures, human nature and weak safety culture. Having a strong safety culture, however, can benefit business competitiveness and worker employability as well as improving safety and health performance. Some of the features of a strong safety culture are:

1. Strong leadership and commitment to high standards of safety and health, from the top of an enterprise. This will be a real priority for top managers - in

practice as well on paper.

2. The full participation and involvement of managers, supervisors and workers at all levels. Positive attitudes towards accident and ill-health prevention will be noticeable throughout an enterprise.

3. A willingness to learn from mistakes when accidents do occur, and to apply lessons learned throughout the enterprise (and its other sites if there are any), since everyone has responsibilities.

There are of course significant differences in national cultures, but a fundamental principle that underpins a strong safety culture is a respect for human dignity and well being, and this is entirely compatible with value frameworks in all national cultures.

WHO: Networking for occupational health “continued”

disorders; Preventive technology; Training of occupational health and safety personnel; Internet resources and networks; National and local profiles and indicators; Economic evaluation and Global burden of disease.

Ministries of labour and labour inspectorates also have an interest in occupational health issues and are invited to strengthen their links with WHO regional Collaboration Centres. If IALI members are interested to know more about the WHO programmes,

please contact Gerry Eijkemans at the World Health Organisation, e-mail eijkemans@who.int

CROWD SAFETY

- David Eves, Technical Adviser to IALI

All around the world, sporting occasions, festivals, shopping malls, funfairs, theatres and the like are attracting very large numbers of people. The risks need to be well managed if their experience is to be enjoyable and safe. In some countries the Labour Inspectorate is the public authority with responsibility for licensing or otherwise enforcing public safety at events or locations such as these.

The risks of catastrophe can be considerable. In the summer of 2003 a crowding accident in which over 240 people died occurred at Mecca during the Hadj. A similar incident was recently reported to have occurred at Nashik, India, when 45 people were crushed to death. It is thought that at least 2,000 people around the world have been killed in accidents involving crowds during the last decade. European regulatory authorities have been shocked into regulatory action by serious accidents to crowds at football stadia.

In Great Britain, general health and safety law requires undertakings to be conducted so as to protect workers and the public from risks arising from work activities, so far as is reasonably practicable, and regulations specifically require that a “sufficient and suitable assessment” of risks be carried out. This covers risks to people in crowded situations.

However, risk assessment is not easy when assessing crowd safety. Human behaviour will vary in different situations. In a crowd, individual members of the public do not behave like members of a trained, disciplined workforce who are familiar with their surroundings and the

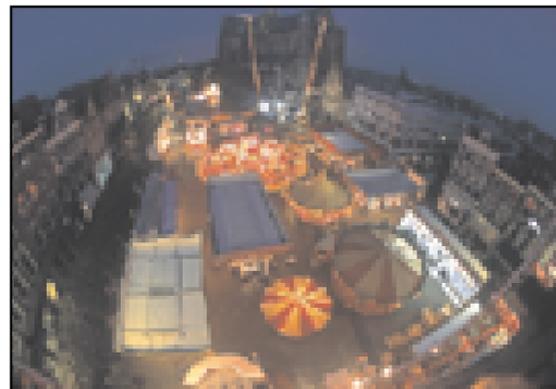
attendant hazards. Controlling risks to crowds is obviously not as simple as fixing a guard to a dangerous part of machinery. Building standards which prescribe evacuation times, numbers of fire exits and maximum travel distances to exits may not take sufficient account of factors affecting safety such as aspects of an individual building’s architectural design, its purpose, the nature of the materials used in construction, or visitors’ familiarity, or lack of it, with the building. Venues more or less in the open air might seem safer but these can also create particular hazards, for example when thousands of people are trying to leave a venue at the same time. And if a serious incident occurs, it is important to ensure that the emergency services can get through the crowds to the scene.

Predictive computer modelling based on research into pedestrian behaviour can help designers estimate the number of people who can pass safely through a given space in a given time. For example, simulation can predict the time taken for a crowd to move through passages and stairways, locate potential bottlenecks and enable redesign and better operational management.

Sometimes it may seem difficult, short of not holding an event at all, to control the risks adequately and comply with the law, but something can usually be done to improve matters. The British Health and

Safety Executive (HSE) commissioned research in 1991 leading to publication of a free leaflet called “Managing Crowds Safely”, which sets out some key points to consider. In 1998 HSE published further research into a risk assessment methodology for crowd safety (see www.hse.gov.uk for more details).

An adequate risk assessment, though essential, is only the first step towards safe operation. There could be benefits to safety in requiring designers and operators of buildings or events attracting very large numbers of people to prepare a written safety case demonstrating that all the risks have been properly assessed and appropriate control measures put in place. In any case, operational plans which specify control measures and describe the system for managing the risks, identifying key people, responsibilities, competencies and arrangements for training staff and responding to emergencies will need to be prepared and regularly reviewed by operators, involving worker representatives, safety practitioners and the emergency services.



Funfair at town square

NEWS IN BRIEF...

New Zealand: TV series follows labour inspectors

A reality television series being filmed with New Zealand labour inspectors will give viewers a chance to see beyond the headlines. The “Special Investigators” series will follow Occupational Safety and Health inspectors as they investigate workplace accidents, and it is hoped the series will result in greater understanding of inspectors’ important work, and the cooperative approach they take to helping businesses

work more safely. “The series is a fantastic opportunity for us,” says OSH National Operations Manager Mike Cosman. “Reality television truly is a global phenomenon, it attracts huge audiences and has the power to influence people’s perceptions and behaviour. We’re hoping that when the series is broadcast in 2005 it will help bring our workplace health and safety messages to a wide audience, in a way that they can really relate to.”

Around sixty inspectors have been trained so they feel comfortable in front of the camera, and can articulate OSH’s key messages. OSH also has editorial control over the material that goes to air, ensuring that privacy and commercial sensitivities are protected. “It’s a win-win situation,” says Mike Cosman. “The television company gets access to some dramatic footage, and we get to communicate directly to the public through the powerful medium of television.”

Austrian Bakeries campaign, 2000 - 2005

The aim of this initiative has been to reduce exposure to flour-dust in bakeries through better information, consultation and supervision. The campaign began in 2001-02 with consultation, information and publicity for a brochure about the basic requirements for reducing such exposures, which led to some improvements in almost 40% of bakeries. At the same time, the Labour Inspectorate continued to consult and to provide information at regular informal meetings of bakers, trade fairs, conferences and at training colleges. The results of the campaign so far have highlighted

the need to pay greater attention to changing patterns of behaviour as well as to improve specific ‘hardware’ measures. It has also been shown that less than a quarter of establishments have worker safety representatives and just over half had access to professional advisors. More information about the basic requirements is available at: www.bmwa.gv.at/BMWA/Themen/Arbeitsrecht/Publikationen/Broschueren/publik080.html



Exposure to flour dust in bakeries

Poland: promoting non-discrimination legislation

For several years, the Polish Labour Inspectorate has been targeting discrimination within labour relations, especially where it concerns sex discrimination.

Following initial visits in previous years, inspectors paid more visits in 2003 on the equal treatment of women and men in labour relations. These inspections were based on a questionnaire covering the issue of equal remuneration and equal opportunities for promotion, access to

upgrading training, working conditions, full time and part-time employment and overtime. The results showed that twice as many men held senior management posts as did women, and that discrimination was most visible in cases of remuneration. Men holding the same office and having similar obligations as women might receive higher annual wages, with differences of up to at least a month’s wage. Differences in remuneration were the biggest in the case of senior

management posts. Inspections on this same topic are continuing in 2004.

It should be added that labour inspectors not only inspect but they also promote non-discrimination, signalling any irregularities to employers and also informing employees of their rights. During their visits labour inspectors distribute detailed leaflets, prepared by the office of the Chief Labour Inspectorate, on equal treatment in employment.

NEWS IN BRIEF...

Austria: New guidance on occupational safety and health management systems

The Austrian Labour Inspectorate and the country's general health insurance organisation have jointly produced the "Austrian Guide for Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems". Based on the ILO's guidelines of 2001 on the subject

and relevant national legislation, the Guide provides a framework for action, taking account of a variety of existing systems, promoting workers' rights and also addressing the role of industrial health promotion. It enables voluntary inspection of the

effectiveness of OSH management systems but does not provide for certification by third parties

The Guide is to be published in September this year as a joint declaration of intent by both sides

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKING...

International collaboration on consumer protection: Baltic Sea Market Surveillance

- Dr. Erika Schmedt, Hamburg, Germany

In May 2004, the Department of Health and Consumer Protection in Hamburg, the North German labour inspectorate, Scandinavian, Baltic countries and Poland set up a market surveillance network to exchange information about consumer protection issues (excluding food topics).

The network will establish cooperation at an executive level between the

consumer protection authorities in the Baltic Sea area, with the aims of improving health and safety for consumers at national and European levels as well as reducing economic disadvantages for industry and importers. The first action on cross-border cooperation will be to check domestic electrical equipment. In future market surveillance activities will

be planned in cooperation; information flow and approaches will be increased and coordinated. A coordinated and quick flow of information should inhibit products being re-imported that have already been removed from the market because of poor safety or health design standards. The first results are expected in winter 2004.

International collaboration on training of labour inspectors

- Krzysztof Kowalik, Poland

In July 2004, members of the International Network of Training Centres met in Wroclaw, Poland, for a seminar entitled "The preventive role of labour inspectors – a new approach to the profession". Delegates came from educational and training institutes in Algeria, France, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, Italy and Poland.

The agenda comprised presentations about the tasks and competences of labour inspectors, in particular

those relating to their preventive activities, and about the role of training centres in helping to shape a new approach to the profession. At the discussion, it was emphasised that prevention should be understood as an inherent element of all activities of labour inspectorates, as they serve to prevent risks and shape proper relations in employment. Curricula for labour inspectors' training courses should cover not only the ability to

identify problems discovered during inspections, but also communication and influencing skills needed to achieve results. The role of the training centres should consist in refining the forms of labour inspectors' activities and the skills needed to promote preventive approaches amongst social partners. Participants agreed to present a list of good practices in this area at their next meeting.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKING...

National networking to improve construction site safety

Phoebe Schröder, Hesse, Germany

As part of its contribution to the EU Construction Site Campaign in 2003, the German Land of Hesse took the lead in setting up a nation-wide construction network called Netzwerk Baustelle, to enhance cooperation between all federal countries and accident insurance institutions.

Under the national programme for construction, 6500 building sites nation-wide were inspected in 2003, and much useful information was gained as a result. It was found that although most sites had site safety coordinators and had health and safety plans, many of these plans did not meet national standards. Nevertheless, where site safety coordinators had been appointed, health and safety plans were usually

better as was compliance. However, sites with five employees or fewer showed distinctly worse results than larger construction sites. Based on the results of this project. An action plan for 2004 has been drawn up that includes projects for the direct consultation of employers and contractors, and also training courses for safety coordinators.

The Netzwerk Baustelle is a starting point for many diverse federal and regional activities, and already has greatly improved the exchange of information and cooperation authorities. Furthermore, uniform

information and help at a national level is now available, which is also easily accessible to employers and workers via the website set up by the network's partners - www.netzwerk-baustelle.de (The final report of the campaign is available in English on this website.)



Building the Hamburg Arena



Networking for occupational health: WHO programmes and collaboration centers

- Dr. Gerry Eijkemans, Occupational Health Unit, WHO, Geneva



Working conditions do often not meet the minimum standards and guidelines set for occupational health by the WHO and the ILO. Throughout the world, poor occupational health and safety leads to two million work-related deaths, 271 million injuries and 160 million occupational diseases per year. Only 10-15 % of the total global workforce has access to some kind of occupational health services.

The main problem of the absence of occupational health services is the continuous presence of hazards in the workplace, such as noise, toxic chemicals and dangerous machinery. An additional problem is the massive inclusion of children in the workforce. In addition, due to the rapid changes in economic structures, technologies and demography, new occupational health needs have appeared, while the traditional problems such as silicosis, injuries, hearing loss etc. are far from solved. Responding to this, WHO is

working in three areas:

- strengthening of regional and national policies and occupational health programmes, based on evidence of the burden of disease
- capacity building, including training and making available tools and knowledge.
- expansion/strengthening of preventive (basic) occupational health services

The framework for WHO's Occupational Health Programme is The Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All from 1996. Implementation of the strategy has been undertaken by this Programme in the WHO Headquarters, the six Regional Offices, and the Network of 70 WHO Collaborating Centres (CCs) in Occupational Health worldwide. The network members support each other; the synergy that is created is

much larger than the sum of individual centres and activities. The CCs are organized in 15 Task Forces to carry out a four-year Work Plan 2002-2005 consisting of at least 130 funded projects. Projects focus on various priority areas and result in products, which range from documents and brochures, to training courses for occupational health personnel and/or students, translation of occupational health materials, the establishment of questionnaires, guidelines and international collaboration. The 2001-2005 WHO Global Work Plan can be found at www.who.int/oeh. The 15 priority areas and Task Forces are: Occupational health technical guidance; Intensive partnership in Africa; Child labor and adolescent workers; Elimination of silicosis; Health care workers; Health promotion activity; Mental health and stress at work; Promotion of OS&H in small enterprises and in the informal sector; Prevention of musculoskeletal