

Conference Report

Promotion of the Guide for Labour Inspectors on Occupational Health and Safety October 8, 2021

The Safety at Work Association of Montenegro (SWAM) Conference was held on October 8, 2021 at the CUE hotel.



The conference, which was attended by 30 participants, presented the results of activities carried out by the Safety at Work Association of Montenegro (SWAM) in the previous year. In addition, the Guide for Labour Inspectors was presented with the aim to familiarize labour inspectors on occupational health and safety (OSH) with necessary skills for implementation effective inspection control of working conditions.

The conference was aimed at improving occupational safety on construction sites, but also on improving work of inspectors on OSH, which are the main regulatory instrument for the implementation of Law on Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH). In addition to the lack of equipment, the Labour Inspection also faces the problem of a limited number of inspectors with required technical and expert knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the technical capacity of labour inspectors in order to provide integrated services and more supervision with available resources.



The Guide was developed within the projects activities, having in mind the high number of injuries at work in construction sites. Labour inspectors learned the necessary skills to conduct effective inspection of working conditions and occupational safety through the Guide. The published Guide will be of use to inspectors as guidelines to enable proactive construction site visits, whereas inspection visits play a crucial role in the prevention of construction sites accidents and health problems, which is also stated in the C 167 – Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167) in Article 35 (b).

The presentation of the Guide for Labour Inspectors on OSH in the construction sector, whose author is Zlatko Popovic - labour inspector and coordinator for OSH (Directorate for Inspection Affairs), was followed by a discussion. All conference participants were from the OSH field so therefore they had a numerous questions for inspectors.



One of the conclusions that emerged from this conference was that our goal is to provide what LOSH implies – “providing working conditions that do not lead to work-related injuries, occupational diseases and work-related diseases.” The interest of all societies, all entities and every individual is to achieve the highest level of OSH at work. In order to achieve the main goal a systematic approach is inevitable in preventive action and connecting all entities that bears obligations and activities at the national level.

A healthy, motivated and satisfied workforce is important for the social and economic well-being of every country. OSH contributes to greater contentment of employees and thus them as citizens, greater productivity and efficiency in achieving organizational goals. Low levels of OSH affect: motivation, work performance, injuries at work, sick leaves and disability rates. Workplace accidents and injuries cause disruption of the GDP and the well-being of the state and other entities. Every work-related injuries and occupational disease acquired in the workplace is a great expense for the employer. Tired, unmotivated and discontented employees are unproductive, inefficient and uncreative and this results in the biggest losses for the employer.

The current pandemic situation, both in the world and Montenegro, has shown how important OSH is. It is clear that a lot of work still needs to be done on its improvement. Being aware of the fact that employees in Montenegro are greatest resources and that occupational health is crucial, we all expect that OSH will be one of the priorities in the work of the Government of Montenegro.



When it comes to employers, the most important thing is that they understand that investing in the safety and health of their employees is not a business barrier but investing in the most important capital of every company. This will make them recognized, socially responsible, moreover competitive and desirable employers.

One of the raised issues was the quality of work of authorized organizations. There are over 40 authorized organizations in Montenegro and over 500 persons who have passed the Certified Safety Professional (CSP). It is assumed that only 1/3 of that number have an OSH job. The participants of the conference agreed that the good side of this is that quality can be obtained by selection from quantity.

The issue of the official Rulebook on Authorized Organisations, which is 16 years old, and it was also agreed that the SWAM would launch an initiative to change it.

The issue of line ministries not owning the Risk Assessment Acts and completely lacking in experts for occupational safety will also be discussed in the next period.

The work of coordinators K1 and K2 was also recognized as great issue. This is the problem Labour Inspectors and authorized experts and organizations are facing.





Podgorica
October 10, 2021

Prepared by
Djina Jankovic