



FEBC Conference
Workers and Creativity: How to improve working conditions by participative methods?

Working conditions in Latvia
Ergonomics perspective

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Background

Henrijs Kalkis, Ph.D., Assoc. professor

- Eur.Erg. Certified European Ergonomist
- PhD in Management science
- MSc. in Management science
- Higher professional education in Work environment and expertise
- Copenhagen Business School (Denmark, 2006), Management studies
- Penn State University (USA, 2014 – 2015), Fulbright research scholar, Management, Marketing, Design, Ergonomics research and studies
- Board member of *Latvian Ergonomics Society*
- Board member of *Latvian Business Efficiency Association*
- Council member of *FEES*
- Council member of *IEA*
- Council member of *CREE*

Some facts about LATVIA

Country in the **Baltic region** of **Northern Europe**

The territory of LATVIA covers

64,589 km² (24,938 sq mi)

- Inhabitants of LATVIA - 2.2 million
- Employees – 1.146 million
- The capital and largest city is Riga.



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Economy

- **Agriculture - products:** ~ 4 %
 • grain, vegetables; beef, pork, milk; fish
- **Industries:** ~24.0 %
 • synthetic fibres, machinery, wood production, fertilizers, electronics, pharmaceuticals, textiles
- **Services:** ~72 %
 • tourism, trade, transit
- **Exports – commodities:**
 • wood and wood products, machinery and equipment, metals, textiles

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Introduction



- Our rapidly changing living environment is closely related to changes in work environment – work becomes more intense and requires maximum attention and concentration, adaptation of work with mental and physical capacity of an individual, as well as dealing with different managerial issues.
- Work environment in Latvia has changed rapidly over last years (after re-establishing independence) due to global changes and changes in Latvian occupational health and safety (OH&S) system, especially after 2004 when joining EU.
- Still there is a lack of understanding of «Safety culture» among organisations and managers

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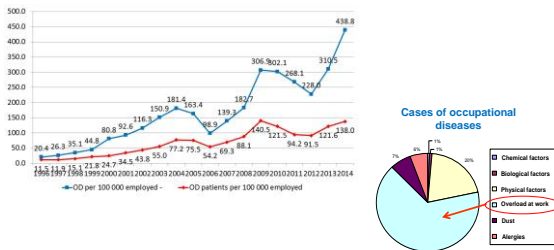


Legislation background in Latvia

- Law on Health and Safety – **Labour Protection Law** (into force on **01.01.2002.**) - based on EU framework directives.
- First higher professional education program “Environmental Protection and Expertise” was developed in 2002 in the University of Latvia by professor Valdis Kalkis. Later this study programme became leading master study program in Latvia.
- System for health and safety surveillance established in 1997, adjusted in 2004 and significantly improved in 2009
- Training of occupational physicians since 1996 improving over the years (e.g. from 50 hours to 500 hours) that result in increase of registered occupational diseases

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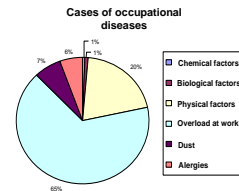
In recent years in Latvia rapidly increases occupational diseases connected with WRMSD



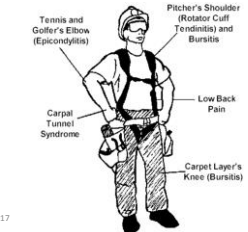
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Occupational diseases

- Diagnostics and general awareness have improved significantly last years
- Work related musculoskeletal disorders are connected with ergonomics risks at work



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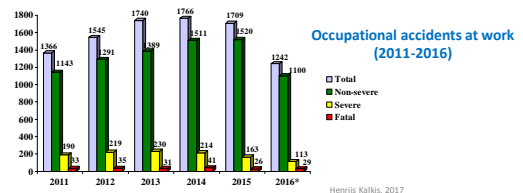
Occupational accidents

- System for registration since 1997 characterised by wrong approach
 - » looking for the "guilty" person
 - » massive paperwork and
 - » lack of enforcement and information
- Slightly improved in 2005 together with increased penalties for not registration of accident
- Little information and awareness campaigns
- Major change in registration system since start of 2010 aiming at easier registration and reduction of paperwork

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Current trends in occupational accidents

- Resulting in decrease of fatal accidents and 15-20 times lower registered total accident rate compared with EU countries
- Fatal accidents on the rise after economic recovery Lack of «safety culture» implementation in organisations



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Facts and figures in the field of OHS from STATE LABOUR INSPECTORATE (SLI) perspective

SLI, 2016

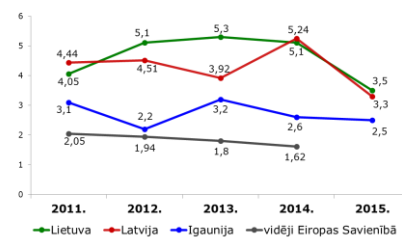


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- ~3000 applications received at SLI annually
- ~17 000 violations found annually by SLI during its inspections (2/3 on OHS issues)
- High number of fatal and serious occupational accidents at work (almost 2x exceeding average numbers of the EU)
- ~1500 undeclared employees discovered annually by the SLI

Fatal occupational accidents at work per 100 000 employees (Baltic states, 2011-2015)

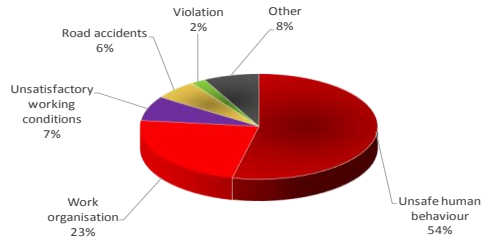
SLI, 2016



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Causes of severe and fatal occupational accidents

SU, 2016



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WORK CONDITIONS AND RISKS IN LATVIA, Research results (2007 - 2013)

- In Latvia new and modern occupational risks have replaced the old and conventional ones.
- The results of the survey confirm that different **psycho-emotional factors** (shortage of time, overtime work, long working hours etc.) and **ergonomic factors** (work with a computer, handling of heavy objects, awkward posture, and repetitive movements) are the most significant occupational risks.
- Work environment measurements reveal that microclimate and dust (especially, abrasive dust and welding fumes) should be considered as very essential occupational problems.

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WORK CONDITIONS AND RISKS IN LATVIA, Research results (2007 - 2013)

- Measurements of the work environment are not carried out frequently enough. Results of the Study show that work environment measurement values exceed mandatory or recommended limit values in one third of cases.
- In most cases occupational risk assessment cannot be considered as being objective.
- Too low numbers of employers, employees and self-employed are informed on legal requirements, as well as on their responsibilities and rights.
- Hence more regulations should be introduced in the field of ergonomics and psychosocial risk evaluation.

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Main reasons for poor work conditions (1):

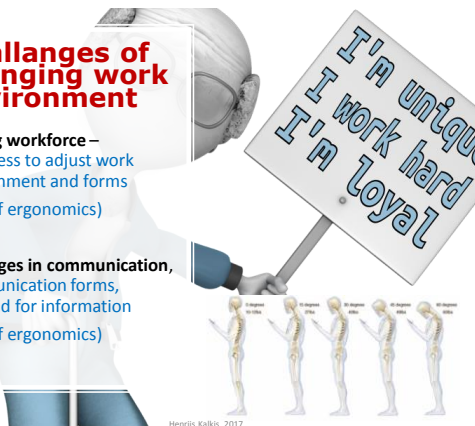
- work processes containing hard manual handling
- compulsory work postures
- inappropriate workplaces
- lack of employees involvement in decision making
- insufficient physical activities after the work or in leisure time for employees
- frequently workers agree to work without contracts
- poor safety culture

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Challenges of changing work environment

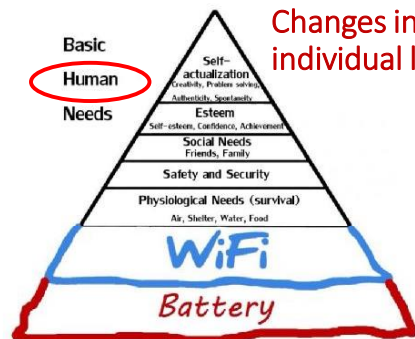
- Aging workforce – readiness to adjust work environment and forms (role of ergonomics)

- Changes in communication, communication forms, demand for information (role of ergonomics)



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Changes in individual level



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Main reasons for poor work conditions (2): Stress and violence at work

- stress factors related to inappropriate application of ergonomics
- repetitive work, high pace,
- just in time operations,
- 24 hour employees,
- psychological incompatibility at the work team (fight for roles, status etc.)
- fair for losing the job,
- now problems with migrants.



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LATVIAN ERGONOMICS SOCIETY (LES)

- **SOCIETY** founded in 2006 and for the moment we have 70 sustainable members, incl. 7 organisations.
- **SOCIETY members are:**
 - occupational health and safety experts,
 - enterprise managers,
 - occupational health medical doctors,
 - scientists in different sciences,
 - University's academic personnel and students
 - Designers, architects and others.
 - LES unifies specialists from many branches.
- **MISSION:** LES promotes ergonomics scientific and practical development in Latvia to improve work and life quality.



LATVIAN ERGONOMICS SOCIETY (LES)

- Latvian Ergonomics Society acquired the status of a **scientific institution** in Latvia (Reg.No. 464112, since 19th of May, 2008).
- Latvian Ergonomics Society Ergonomics Society admitted to the federation (**The Federation of European Ergonomics Societies – FEES**), since 13th of October 2010
- Latvian Ergonomics Society admitted to the International Ergonomics Association (**International Ergonomics Association**), since 10th of August 2008
- Latvian Ergonomics Society admitted to the Centre for **Registration of European Ergonomists (CREE)**, since June, 2013

Latvian Ergonomics Society acquired the status of a public benefit organization in the following areas of activity:

- civil society development
- promotion of education
- science promotion



Latvian Ergonomics Society: potential solutions (1)

- Develop understanding in society, students and employees about ergonomics role in occupational health and safety by training and involvement in scientific research projects.

- Continue collaboration with

☐ FEES (Federation of European Ergonomics Societies)



☐ IEA (International Ergonomics Association)



☐ CREE (Centre for Registration of European Ergonomists)



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Latvian Ergonomics Society: Potential solutions (2)

- **Continue education** about the significance of ergonomics and promote understanding about benefits of ergonomics coherence with productivity and wellbeing among Latvian society, including employers and employees.
- **Cost-benefit analysis**
- **Business efficiency** and workers' wellbeing



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Latvian Ergonomics Society: Potential solutions (3)

- **Ergonomics in workplace design: good for health and good for business!**

Additional attention is required to intensify the involvement of governmental and non-governmental institutions supporting ergonomics evolution.

At the moment there is insufficient support and collaboration from such institutions:

- State Labour inspectorate
- Trade union collaboration with Latvian Ergonomics Society: <http://www.lbas.lv/about/trade-union?locale=en>
- Collaboration with employees from various societies:
 - Latvian Business efficiency association (www.efektivs.lv)
 - Latvian Work Safety association (<http://www.ldas.lv/home/startpage/lv/>)
- Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK): <http://en.lddk.lv/>
- Etc.

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Thank you
for attention!

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Working Condition

Excellent

Poor

