



REST@Work

REducing STress at Work

With financial support from the European Union



REST@Work

REducing STress at Work

Work-related stress: a risk to be managed together

With financial support from the European Union



Publication made in the framework of the project REST@Work - REducing STress at Work
Co-financed by the European Union under the Social Dialogue Program – DG EMPL

This publication reflects only the authors' view and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Authors

Christian Nardella, Feliciano Iudicone, Silvia Sansonetti - Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini

Fulvio D'Orsi – ITAL-UIL

Gabriella Galli - UIL

Project partners

1. Lead Applicant



2. Co-applicants



3. Associated organizations



For information

UIL

Servizio Politiche del Sociale e Sostenibilità

Via Lucullo, 6 Roma 00187 Italia

www.uil.it

The publications are distributed free of charge – hence they cannot be sold or reproduced by any means.

Introduction

1. Work-related stress in Europe

The size of the work-related stress phenomenon
The protection of occupational health and safety (OHS)

2. The project REST@Work

3. Desk survey

The notion of work-related stress in the EU Member States' legislations
Implementation of the Agreement on work-related stress – the state of the art
Workers' representation rights and involvement
Penalties
Monitoring and assessment of measures preventing or tackling work-related stress
Tools to support the monitoring of work-related stress in SMEs
The role played by social partners

4. Survey on workers, workers' representatives and employers

The questionnaire REST@Work
The survey sample
Data analysis
Results
Socio-demographic and employment data
State of the art of the work-related stress assessment
Workers' and social partners' involvement (HSR)
Workers' information and training
The characteristics of the workplace
Conditions and wellbeing levels at work

5. National Focus Group

6. Conclusions and policy orientations

Bibliography

Introduction

Psychosocial risks and work-related stress are one of the most important problems of the current labour world, capable of causing severe consequences both on workers' health and on the companies' production capacity.

With a view to tackling this problem, in recent years many initiatives have been undertaken in the European countries designed to provide to the labour world useful strategies, methodologies and tools to combat this phenomenon and promote organizational well-being at the workplace.

With regard to work-related stress, the main cornerstone is undoubtedly the European Agreement of October 8, 2004. In a scenario previously characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty also at scientific level, the agreement represented a clear and definitive paradigm shift. By showing that not all situations requiring intense work cause stress and that not all stressful situations are work-related, the Agreement has defined the boundaries within which work-related stress is to be placed and has outlined the pathway for prevention actions.

Several tools have been developed to support companies in the process of evaluating and finding effective protection measures. Both subjective tools, such as questionnaires, designed to study workers' perception, and objective observational tools, designed to analyse the organization of work and measure work-related stress phenomena such as absenteeism and turn-over, have been proposed. All these tools, however, are easier to apply in larger companies. The same holds true for preventive, mitigating or remedial corrective actions, for which examples and models are almost always referred to large medium enterprises.

In general terms, managing psychosocial risks is more difficult in small and medium-sized enterprises, not only due to corporate culture differences, but also to the diversity of relations at the workplace, to greater difficulties in exercising workers' representation and to the characteristics of the production model. Furthermore, the economic crisis has also weighed heavily in recent years, thus limiting the resources available and adding insecurity and uncertainty about job stability.

These considerations have led to this project, which is designed to put the problem of work-related stress in small and medium-sized enterprises under the spotlight, so as to understand the extent of the phenomenon, investigate the level of awareness, as well as the skills and tools put in place, with a view to detecting problems, as well as sharing and disseminating adoptable models and solutions.

Silvana Roseto
Segretaria Confederale UIL

Chapter 1. Work-related stress in Europe

The size of the work-related stress phenomenon

In recent years, significant changes in the labour world have increased complexity, thus putting to test the individual workers' ability to cope with it. The workforce aging and the increase in female labour force are phenomena which cause changes both in the business world and in society and lifestyles. Part-time work and non-standard contracts coexist with traditional contractual terms and conditions, thus contributing to create unequal situations in companies. The need for flexibility, as well as insecurity and precariousness, ongoing changes in the work organization and a more individual-based and result-oriented management of human resources add to the above phenomena. More recently, as a result of the spreading of new information and communication technologies, telework and mobile work have begun to remove the space and time which so far have separated work from personal life. All these conditions profoundly affect the wellbeing of people at work and the perception of how work may have a negative impact on health.

In Europe, 25% of workers say they suffer from work-related stress during all or most of the working time and a similar percentage of workers reports that their working activity is a risk to their health (EU-OSHA 2014).

The fourth survey on working conditions in Europe (Parent-Thirion et al., 2007) found in 2005 that 20% of workers in the first 15 EU Member States and 30% in the new Member States were convinced that their health was threatened by work-related stress. In the first 15 EU Member States the estimated costs attributable to mental health problems due to work-related stress amount to 3-4% of GDP (approximately 265 billion euros per year).

The most frequent causes of work-related stress include the reorganization of work or job insecurity, the extension of working time, as well as the excessive workload and, to a lesser extent, harassment and violence at work. A report published a few years ago by the European Commission (Levi, 2000) showed that 50% of EU workers reported a very intense working pace, 44% none or very limited task rotation and 50% repetitive tasks.

Since 2005 there has been a decrease in the incidence of some psychosocial risk factors: this means that in the EU-OSHA survey fewer people report they have to cope with extended working time or complain about the lack of social support. However, job insecurity and precariousness have increased and a fifth of workers continues to perform work for long hours or with irregular working time. Recently, in some countries reports of pressures at work have increased, as well as violence and harassment which are associated with changes at the workplace due to the economic crisis. In general terms, the differences in working conditions between groups of workers depend on the business sector. However, there are gender differences that are not necessarily related to the sector: it is true, for example, that men work longer and that women face more obstacles in their career. Psychosocial risks are a source of concern for most companies: nearly 80% of managers are concerned about work-related stress and about one out of five regards violence and harassment at work as the major concern. If we consider the various risks separately, the main problem reported by managers regards pressing work pace and the interaction with other subjects such as customers, patients or students (EU-OSHA, 2014).

The protection of occupational health and safety (OHS)

Albeit there is wide acknowledgement and evidence of the negative impact that prolonged exposure to stress at work produce on individual physical and health conditions, the issue of how to define, prevent and reduce stress at work remains a subject of significant divergences across European Member States' legislations and practices.

A first significant step forward towards the adoption of an overall preventive approach on safety and health at work, including reducing risks resulting from stressful situations, was the European Occupational Health and Safety Framework

Directive (Council Directive 89/391/EC, hereinafter OSH Directive).

The Directive introduced the employer's obligation to ensure employees' health and safety in all work-related aspects (Article 5), including the prevention principles which can play a significant role in preventing stress, such as the obligation to adapt the work to the individuals, especially as regards the design of workplaces; the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous and work at a predetermined work-rate and to reducing their impact on health; the obligation to develop a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organization or work, working conditions, social relations and the influence of factors related to the working environment (Article 6).

With a view to effectively enforcing the obligation to put in place preventive measures, the Directive obliges the employer to be in possession of an assessment of the risks to safety and health at work; to decide on the protective measures to be taken; to keep a list of occupational accidents resulting in a worker being unfit for work for more than three working days; to draw up reports on the occupational accidents suffered by the workers (Article 9).

All this information shall be made available to workers or to workers' representatives with specific responsibility for safety and health at work (Article 10). According to the Directive, workers and/or their representatives have the right to be consulted on all issues relating to safety and health at work. The latter have also the right to propose measures to mitigate hazards or remove sources of danger and to appeal to the authority responsible for the protection of safety and health at work (Articles 10 and 11).

The Directive, however, does not specify which specific risks shall be assessed, nor it explicitly mentions work-related stress, which is referred to only in the Health and Safety Directives, later introduced in compliance with Article 16 of the OSH Directive. In particular, mental stress or mental fatigue shall be taken into account when addressing workstations, including display screen equipment (Council Directive 90/270/EEC) and pregnant workers, or workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (Council Directive 92/85/EEC). Psychosocial risks shall be assessed and prevented for hospital and healthcare workers (Council Directive 2010/32/EU).

Nevertheless, during the 1990s, several experts and studies, including reports from Eurofound and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, identified work-related stress as an increasingly alarming issue.

The Commission reacted at first by introducing 'soft law' measures, including non-binding guidelines, and proposing a flexible framework for action at national and company levels.

Nevertheless, the Commission itself addressed gaps and shortcomings of the European and national legislation in defining 'work-related stress' and the measures designed to prevent and tackle it, as well as the national authorities' scarce enforcement of the rules concerning health and safety at work, as the main reasons for the limited acknowledgement of stress as a risk factor.

Hence a consultation with social partners was launched in 2002, under Article 138 (2) of the EC Treaty (Article 154 (2) of the TFEU), with a view to ensuring a minimum level of protection against work-related stress throughout Europe. The outcome of the consultation was the beginning of negotiations between European social partners, which eventually led to the signature of the Framework Agreement on work-related stress of October 8, 2004.

The Agreement committed employers to including stress in the general obligation to prevent occupational risks enshrined in the OSH Directive. It provided a description of stress and work-related stress, as well as indicators for identifying stress-related problems and a list of measures to prevent, eliminate or reduce stress.

Social partners also agreed that the agreement had to be implemented at national level by means of their organisations' national practices, rather than asking the Commission to transpose it into a European Directive.

According to the European Commission (2011), the agreement had an impact on promoting awareness on the issue, especially in terms of further guidance and awareness raising. Seven Member States also amended their regulatory framework after the signature of the agreement, explicitly mentioning 'psychosocial risks or stress' in the regulations on

occupational health and safety.

However, the report on the implementation of the Agreement drafted by the signatory social partners and similar studies conducted by European institutions (European Commission 2011, Guarinoni et al. 2013) documented that its implementation was undermined by the significant differences still recorded across Europe. The same held true for the actual enforceability of its provisions upon employers due to the different industrial relations systems.

Although these reports further describe initiatives and actions taken by the Member States at national and sectoral levels, there is still little knowledge about the workers' and employers' real awareness of work-related stress, especially as regards small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Chapter 2. The project REST@Work

Stress as a central issue in prevention policies

"In Europe 25% of workers report they suffer from work-related stress during all or most of the working time and a similar percentage of workers reports their work has a negative impact on their health. Psychosocial risks contribute to exacerbate these negative effects of work".

"Psychosocial risks are a source of concern for most companies: nearly 80% of managers are concerned about work-related stress" (Eurofound and OSHA, 2014).

Since 1989, in compliance with the Framework Directive, European employers must assess all risks and adopt the related preventive measures. Furthermore the Framework Agreement on work-related stress (2004) is a commitment of the signatory parties to apply the specific provisions to the national context.

Problematic issues and potential of the European agreement on stress

Nevertheless significant differences (European Commission, 2011; Guarinoni 2013) persist in the Member States' legislations and practices, also due to the different systems of relations between the parties, and the transposition of the 2004 Agreement has been patchy. The concrete ways for implementing the Agreement and preventive practices in micro, small and medium-sized companies, which account for the most significant share of European companies, are scarcely known.

The eight countries involved in the project

Taking into account the above stated problems, eight European countries (France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Hungary) have jointly decided to develop the project **Reducing stress at work** within their territories - in close cooperation with national research institutions - by involving stakeholders (employers and their associations, workers' representatives, workers and their trade unions), with a view to conducting a quantitative and qualitative survey of the measures, provisions and policies implemented in SMEs with reference to work-related stress, by combining a preliminary desk survey and the field survey carried out by means of questionnaires and focus groups.

Desk survey

The desk survey described in Chapter 3 of the Handbook compares studies and research carried out at European level and in the countries adhering to the project and collects additional partners' information about work-related stress; the related changes in legislation; the implementing ways; the transposition of the European Agreement on stress; the applicability of the Agreement and the related measures to the various sectors.

The survey has been also meant to deepening the topic of specific representation on health and safety in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises - hence the enforceability of information, training and consultation rights with specific reference to the risk of work-related stress.

The survey has also delved into the "penalty system" relating to risk assessment, including psychosocial risks, adopted in the States participating in the project.

The institutional monitoring activities on the implementation of the European Agreement, conducted at national level, have been the subject of the final part of the desk survey, with specific reference to SMEs, for which every good practice in assessing and managing the risk of work-related stress and in implementing support measures by institutions and social partners has been sought

Field survey: questionnaires

The field survey, conducted through questionnaires in all partner countries, has been addressed to all the three partners of the strategic Alliance, namely employers, workers and representatives with specific expertise in small and medium-sized companies' health and safety: the corporate partners whose cooperation ensures the effectiveness of preventive actions. The surveyed sample has been defined with reference both to the above stated partners and the company size (namely micro, small and medium-sized companies).

This part of the study is described in Chapter 4 of the Handbook.

The aims of the survey can be placed along the following analysis levels which are closely interwoven:

- a) to take stock of the state of the art of work-related stress risk assessment, by implementing possible preventive measures and paying attention to the differences between small, medium and large companies;
- b) to assess the key aspects in the process of involving the various actors;
- c) to detect the conditions which are the greatest problems of the work environment.

The surveyed areas are the following: socio-biographical and employment profile; state of the art of the work-related stress assessment; training / information of workers and health and safety representatives (HSRs); involvement of workers and HSRs in assessing work-related stress; characteristics of the work environment; conditions of the work environment; perception of the work environment; level of occupational well-being / stress and discomfort.

Field survey: Focus Groups conducted at national level

The carrying out of Focus Groups nationwide has provided a qualitative contribution to the field survey, thus enabling stakeholders (employers' associations, trade unions) and experts operating to support companies, as well as institutional representatives, to tell their experiences and talk about the work characteristics and relations in micro and small businesses, as well as the need to adopt preventive measures and practices suited to the specific features of this company size.

Therefore the main aim is to assess - from a qualitative viewpoint - the state of the art of prevention policies and the way

in which work-related stress is tackled in SMEs. The topics discussed are related to five main aspects, which have made it possible to highlight the different risk characteristics and the tools to analyse them, together with the major problems incurred and the initiatives put in place:

1. the characteristics of psychosocial risk in SMEs;
2. the resources and tools to address psychosocial risk in SMEs;
3. the problems incurred in the implementation of measures to combat work-related stress in SMEs;
4. participants' initiatives targeted to SMEs;
5. work-related stress and new technologies.

Project outcomes

As a result of the desk survey and the field survey carried out in the eight partner countries, the following outcomes have been identified and the following tools have been defined:

- to provide project participants with tools to share the survey qualitative and quantitative results by drafting the Handbook, translating it into the partners' languages and distributing it;
- to provide project participants with tools to improve their national contact points' knowledge, with a view to implementing prevention policies targeted to the risk of work-related stress in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, through the Toolkit providing also operational guidelines such as good practices for evaluating and managing the stress risk. The Toolkit is made available in the partners' languages;
- to provide social partners and EU and national institutions with recommendations for making preventive actions against work-related stress effective also in micro, small and medium-sized companies

Chapter 3. Desk survey

The notion of work-related stress in the EU Member States' legislations

The European Agreement of October 8, 2004 describes stress as 'a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them'. Though 'work-related stress' cannot be considered a disease in itself, it 'may reduce effectiveness at work and may cause ill health'.

The definition clearly identifies a link between work organisation, internal communication methods and stress, building upon the obligation envisaged by Article 5 of the European Framework Directive 89/391/EEC.

Yet, the actual relevance of this link in the national legislation depends on the combined effect of the existence of a notion of work-related stress in the national regulations implementing the OSH Directive and of the way in which the agreement is possibly implemented.

As for the countries involved in the REST@W project, the following differences in the way in which the legislation refers to the topic can be identified.

Legislation in Italy, France, Portugal and Hungary makes explicit references to work-related stress or psychosocial risk, thus formally requiring the adoption of preventive measures.

In Italy, the national provisions on health and safety at work (Legislative Decree no. 81/2008) refers to the European Agreement of October 8, 2004 when introducing 'work-related stress' among the risks to be assessed by the employer. This makes the definitions and indicators adopted by the Agreement relevant for case law addressing the correlation

existing between diseases and work-related stress.

The French Labour Code specifies that the employer must evaluate and prevent physical and mental risks at the workplace and take any necessary measure to ensure safety and protect workers' physical and mental health. The prevention of stress should fully consider methods and organisation of work, working conditions, social relations and environmental factors, especially for what concerns the risks of moral damage.

In Portugal, Law 102/2009, amended by Law 3/2014, requires the employer ensures workers' safety and health conditions in all work aspects, including psychosocial risk factors. In particular, the employer is obliged to adapt work to the worker, especially in designing the workplace and selecting the working equipment and production methods aimed at reducing monotonous and repetitive work and psychosocial risks.

The Hungarian Health and Safety Work Act, as amended in 2007, includes psychosocial risk among possible dangers. It is defined as the sum of impacts of work organisation, work schedule, job uncertainty and other factors affecting the employee's behaviour (European Commission, 2011). In addition, there are Ministerial Decrees defining activities and classes of employees most exposed to such risk.

In Spain and Lithuania, work-related stress is addressed by law in terms of interaction between the worker and the working environment.

With specific reference to Spain, even if work-related stress is not mentioned by national regulations on health and safety at work (Law 31/1995), the employer is obliged to adapt work to the person and to do so in a coherent plan encompassing technology, work organization, working conditions, social relations and the influence of environmental factors at work.

This broad definition requires work-related stress to be assessed also in the light of the spheres addressed by other European Directives or Agreements, including violence and harassment at work, work equipment and visual display units, as well as working time arrangements.

In addition, case law has repeatedly addressed work-related stress as one of the risks to be prevented and managed by the employer, whose failure is to be intended as a breach of Law 31/1995 and as a just cause for the employee's resignation¹. This was reaffirmed by the judgment issued by the Supreme Court of Justice of Madrid in October 5, 2005, which eventually recognised the role played by the European Agreement as guidance for preventive actions aimed at reducing stress.

In Lithuania, Order No. A1-159/V-612 and Order No. A1-457/V-961 define psychosocial risk as a factor causing mental stress in workers as a result of working conditions, job requirements, work organisation, work content, relations among workers or between employer and workers in a company. The law, however, does not oblige the employer to include it in risk assessment - hence the absence of preventive measures is permitted.

In Greece and in Romania, there is no specific reference to work-related stress or to 'psychosocial risk'. Law 3850/2010 in Greece and Law 319/2006 in Romania recall the obligation set in the Directive to take the necessary measure to adapt work to the individuals.

Nevertheless, the Greek Civil Code also recognizes the general principle of "employers' duty of care" (Art. 662 C.C.). According to this principle, the employer must take all appropriate and adequate measures to protect workers' health and safety. On the basis of an extensive Interpretation, this includes also the protection of workers' mental health and personality and the employer's obligation to adapt work to the individual person.

¹In this regard, it is worth noting that the employer may be punished under Article 50 of the Workers' Statute. This means that the worker may request the voluntary termination of a contract with the same compensation as for unfair dismissal.

Implementation of the Agreement on work-related stress – The state of the art

The transposition of the agreement at national level is a tool designed to strengthen the different legal frameworks and provide some common criteria to identify work-related stress both for the purposes of defining preventive measures and as a criterion influencing case law.

Pursuant to Article 4 of the Agreement, an analysis of the problems relating to occupational stress may involve the following factors: work organization and processes, working conditions and environment, communication, subjective factors. Article 4 clearly states that if an occupational stress problem is identified, measures shall be taken to prevent, eliminate or reduce it. The responsibility for defining the appropriate measures rests with the employer, but these measures shall be identified with workers' and/or their representatives' involvement and cooperation.

The Agreement also provides a list of potential indicators, risks factors and measures that should be at the basis of the measures to be implemented at company or factory levels.

A high level of absenteeism, high staff turnover, frequent interpersonal conflicts or complaints by workers are all indicators that should be considered potential stress signs.

The list of risk factors provides some clear examples of how the general risk classes should be considered.

Apart from the aspects concerning work organisation (working time arrangements, degree of autonomy, matching between workers' skills and job requirements, workload, etc.) and working environment (exposure to abusive behaviour, noise, heat, dangerous substances, etc.), the Agreement addresses risks factors such as internal communication, intended not only as clarity of duties, but also as actual employment prospects; the management of change (for instance in the framework of restructuring processes), as well as subjective factors (emotional and social pressures, feeling unable to cope, perceived lack of support, etc.).

Moreover, the agreement calls for the regular revision of measures intended to prevent or tackle stress, which may include proper management of communication, adequate support for individuals and teams, matching responsibility and control over work, training, compliance with workers' information and consultation rights.

However, the potential for the agreement to provide a common 'toolbox' to guide and inform policies addressing work-related stress, as well as for monitoring and enforcement measures, is quite limited.

In Italy, the agreement was signed by most social partners and explicitly mentioned in Legislative Decree 81/2008. This made its provisions enforceable upon all employers and workers and not only on the signatory organisations' members. Similarly, in France a collective agreement was signed by most social partners, with the notable exception of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), and was later extended by Ministerial Decree of April 23, 2009, thus becoming applicable to employers and workers.

In Hungary, the agreement was transposed into law after consultations with social partners, thus making it binding on all employers in the country.

The Spanish social partners incorporated the European Agreement into the National Collective Bargaining Agreement (ANC) of 2005-06, as well as in the following renewals. These agreements are signed between the most representative unions and employers' organizations and formulate recommendations and priorities on the collective agreements signed at lower levels. Therefore they are only a source for the possible introduction of specific clauses addressing work-related stress in collective agreements.

It should be noted, however, that in the absence of recognition by law, the indicators, criteria and obligations enshrined in the agreement are binding only for the employers who are members of the organisations signing the collective agreements, while the others remain bound only to the legal definition.

In Lithuania the agreement was introduced by law after consultations with social partners. However, since the law does not include psychosocial risks among occupational risks, and the abovementioned Orders are intended as mere 'guidelines',

employers have the discretionary power to include them in risk assessment, possibly upon request of workers' representatives. In Portugal, the agreement has not been implemented yet and the notion of psychosocial risks is not referred to in collective bargaining agreements, nor are similar risks (such as violence at work or psychological harassment) addresses. The General Union of Workers (UGT), one of the major trade union in Portugal, noted that a translation of the agreement in Portuguese was actually made and disseminated and that a number of initiatives were undertaken (such as awareness raising campaigns and training). Nevertheless, they were promoted unilaterally by unions. According to UGT, the main reasons for the failure to implement the agreement are to be found in the lack of 'political will' both on the employers' and the government's sides, as well as in the prominence of issues considered more pressing in the social dialogue agenda following the economic crisis.

In Greece, social partners agreed to implement the agreement at national level in the framework of the renewal of the national general collective agreement for 2008-2009.

Finally, it is worth noting that in Romania the national agreement, signed in 2007, is no longer applicable. In fact, Law 62/2012 abolished national collective bargaining in Romania, whose efficacy was previously extended to the employers and employees. Only sectoral and company level agreements can be binding for companies, provided specific representation thresholds are achieved.

The table below summarises the actual picture in the countries examined with regard to the existence of an obligation to include psychosocial risks factors in risk assessment pursuant to national law, as well as of the obligation to consider the criteria and indicators included in the agreement.

Table 1 – Inclusion of work-related stress in law provisions concerning health and safety at work and applicability of the criteria set out in the European Agreement in the countries examined

Country	Work-related stress or psychosocial risks are considered risk factors by law provisions on health and safety at work	Applicability of criteria set out in the European Agreement
Italy	Yes	On all activities
Portugal	Yes	None
France	Yes	On all activities
Spain	No, there is only the obligation to 'adapt the work to the person'.	On the sectors covered by the collective agreements referring to the Agreement.
Romania	Yes	None
Hungary	Yes	On all activities
Lithuania	No	None (the national transposition of the agreement is not binding)
Greece	Yes	On all activities

Workers' representation rights and involvement

The OSH Directive and the Agreement provide for the worker representatives' right to be informed and participate in the definition and monitoring of preventive measures designed to tackle occupational risks, including work-related stress. However, the involvement modality differ in line with the different industrial relations systems and national experiences². Generally, national legislation entitles workers to appoint their health and safety representatives (HSRs), together with or within works councils.

In some countries, these representatives exercise information and consultation rights mainly through joint bodies created at industry-wide or company levels.

In particular, in Italy, health and safety representatives (HSRs) can be appointed in companies of any size. In compliance with law, workers can appoint at least one HSR in companies with up to 200 employees, three in companies with 200-1000 workers and six in larger companies.

These numbers can be increased by means of collective bargaining.

As to the links with other representation structures, the Italian law lays down that in companies with at least 15 employees (i.e. those where a union delegate - RSA - or a work council - RSU - can be appointed), workers must choose their HSRs among RSAs or RSUs.

The law also allows to appoint HSRs at plant, department or territorial levels. These HSRs may be appointed or elected by workers.

Territorial HSRs are particularly relevant for our study, insofar as they can exercise the information and consultation rights of workers from several companies and shall be consulted by these companies on a preventive basis in order to assess all risks, including work-related stress, and the prevention measures adopted.

It is worth noting that social partners have promoted the territorial RLSs especially in the handicraft and construction sectors, owing to the predominance of small enterprises in these sector. Pursuant to the relevant sectoral collective agreements, the territorial RLSs are coordinated and supported by the sectoral joint body.

Similarly to Italy, the Portuguese law sets only a minimum number of health and safety representatives (HSRs) that rises with the company's size, thus envisaging the possibility of increasing them by means of collective bargaining.

More specifically, a minimum of one representatives is envisaged for companies employing fewer than 61 employees, a minimum of two representatives for companies with 61-150 employees and at least three representatives can be appointed in companies with 151-300 employees (this number increases up to seven times for larger companies).

The health and safety representatives (HSRs) do not overlap with works councils and are elected by workers' direct and secret vote.

In addition, the law lays down that, by collective bargaining, joint bodies can be set up dealing with health and safety issues at firm level (OHS committees), should the unions and the employer require so.

Workers and their representatives are entitled to have adequate and updated information on a wide range of matters related to the prevention of occupational risks, which are listed in laws and regulations. The legislation also provides for specific phases when workers' information right must be exercised, thus obliging the employer to consult them in writing at least once a year. In the absence of workers' representatives at company level, the consultation process should involve workers directly.

In France, the legal framework is more complex, thus entailing some overlapping of different bodies both formally and informally, i.e. having the same workers' representative elected in different bodies.

² It is worth noting that although the right to appoint representatives is legally granted to workers of all companies, regardless of their size, or above some low staff threshold, information is not available on their actual spreading.

In companies employing fewer than 11 employees, workers' representation - including representation on health and safety issues, can be exercised by regional joint committees, with information and consultation tasks, and/or by delegates appointed by the staff (staff delegates), if collective bargaining so provides for.

Staff delegates are the main forms of workers' representation also for workers of small enterprises (i.e. those employing between 10 and 49 people).

In addition, workers of medium-sized enterprises may elect a company-level or factory-level works councils and a health and safety committee: the latter is tasked with information and consultation rights on health and safety issues, as well as with the prevention of risks through awareness raising and information campaigns and actions. Although these bodies are formally separated and have different tasks, the same delegates can be elected in both committees. The law also provides for their formal merging into a single representation body of staff delegates, works councils and health and safety committee, if the employer decides so, when the number of employees is between 50 and 300, or upon joint decision by the employer and the unions in larger companies³.

In Spain, the law provides for the appointment of health and safety representatives by the works council and among the works council members, who are elected by workers by secret vote.

More specifically, one Health and Safety representative can be appointed in companies with 31-49 workers, two in companies with 50-100 employees, three in companies with 101-500 employees and a proportionally increased number up to eight representatives for larger companies.

Workers in companies employing fewer than 31 people - hence where there is no right to have a works council but only staff delegates - can appoint a health and safety representative.

Furthermore, the Spanish law envisages the creation of a joint body, namely the Health and Safety Committee, in companies employing at least 50 employees. This body must ensure workers' participation by regularly and periodically examining the actions taken by the company in the field of risk prevention.

In Lithuania, health and safety joint committees must be set up in companies having at least 50 employees or in smaller enterprises, upon initiative of the employers, of workers' representatives or of the majority of workers. The committee can be established in small companies when their activities entail a significant occupational risk. Employers must consult employees directly if the committee is not in place.

In Romania, information and consultation rights are exercised by means of a joint body, which can include union representatives, when in place at company⁴ level.

The OSH committee must be established in all companies with at least 50 employees. In smaller companies, the labour inspector can request to set up such committees owing to the company and the related risks for workers' safety and health. The OSH Committee is composed of the employer or the employer's legal representative(s), an occupational doctor and trade union representative(s) or workers' representative(s) when trade union structures do not exist in the company.

The committee takes part in the workplace risk assessment and in the definition of the measures preventing occupational risks.

In Hungary, workers are entitled to elect their health and safety representatives in companies with at least 20 employees. The representatives have specific information rights and cooperate with the employer in developing a plan addressing occupational risks within a joint committee.

In case a Health and Safety representative is not in place, the employer must consult workers directly.

In Greece, workers are entitled to appoint a number of health and safety representatives ranging from one (in companies employing fewer than 20 people) to seven.

³This possibility was introduced by law in August 2015. Previously, only employee delegates and works councils could be merged.

⁴Union representatives can be appointed in enterprises having at least 15 employees

Penalties

The different ways of defining work-related stress in the various countries leads to different impacts in terms of penalties for failure to include stress in risk assessment or to tackle it appropriately.

In Italy, Portugal, Spain and France, administrative penalties are envisaged for failure to include work-related stress in risk assessment and the damage caused to workers for work-related stress may lead to compensations and criminal penalties.

In France, the system of collective insurance against accidents at work is also designed with a view to encouraging companies' proactive behaviours by companies, as it increases or decreases in line with the actual number of accidents or occupational diseases recorded by the company.

In Spain, as a consequence of the link established by case law between work-related stress and Art. 50 of Workers' Statute, the worker suffering from diseases caused by work-related stress can request the voluntary termination of the contract and require the monetary compensation envisaged for unfair dismissals.

In Hungary, the law entails administrative sanctions in case preventive actions are not undertaken. Yet, according to the National Federation of Works Councils (MOSz), this rule is scarcely enforced, both as a consequence of the small number of inspectors operating in the country and of their preferences for a 'soft approach', which encourages companies to remedy their infringements rather than directly applying the penalty.

Although compensation is envisaged when a link between work-related stress and damage to health is proven, it is hard to demonstrate the existence of this link, as it should be documented by the occupational doctor responsible for the company, who is actually hired by the company itself, or by the other employees operating in the same workplace.

In Romania, the employer is not obliged to take preventive measures against stress. Hence the only repressive measure is compensation in case workers prove to suffer from damage caused by work-related stress or if stress is proven to have caused severe danger.

In Lithuania, too, the main approach remains compensation when work-related stress is found to trigger off distress, occupational illnesses, as well as physical, moral or health damage.

In Greece, a study of the European Commission (2011) showed that approximately 470 inspections had to be made between April and October 2012. Inspectors visited the same sites twice. During the first round of inspections, it was ascertained that 35% of employers had included psychosocial factors in their occupational risk assessment, mentioning excessive workload, tight deadlines, work at night, violence and relations with the employer as risk factors. During the second round of inspections, it was ascertained that employers had taken the envisaged measures to reduce risk (European Commission, 2011).

Monitoring and assessment of measures preventing or tackling work-related stress

There is poor data at national level on the effectiveness of the measures designed to prevent or to tackle work-related stress.

The main information and data are surveys meant to analyse the workers' perception about their workplace and self-assess their wellbeing at work.

Other information can be collected on the basis of inspections made and the number of companies failing to comply with preventive measures.

Nevertheless overall information is rather patchy across the different countries analysed, with France, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary and Greece having little data or none at all.

In Italy, between 2014 and 2016, the National Institute Against Accidents at Work (INAIL), Regions and Local Health Agencies (ASL) rolled out a monitoring and evaluation plan covering 800 companies, including 549 SMEs from 15 Italian regions. This plan followed the approval of guidelines in 2010 and in 2012⁵ defining minimum standards to assess psychosocial risk, as well as criteria to set out adequate measures to prevent and tackle it at company level and aspects to be monitored by inspectors.

Results suggest that most companies formally evaluate the risk of work-related stress. Yet, the preliminary assessment often shows the absence of such risk (85%). This is more frequent among companies which fail to differentiate the assessment on the basis of the relevant factors which affect workers' exposure to risks, such as tasks and duties, work contract or workplace (D'Orsi et al., 2016) .

Furthermore, the Italian General Confederation of Work (CGIL) and the Italian Labour Union (UIL) have recently carried out surveys on the topic, by means of interviews to health and safety representatives.

The CGIL study (Di Nunzio et al. 2015), covering only the metalworking sector, suggested that only one company out of three did not implement any work-related stress risk assessment. Those that formally did it rarely reported the existence of such risk or the need to improve measures aimed at tackling stress. Assessment were made mainly by external consultants, while health and safety representatives played a role only in 39% of cases.

The survey carried out by UIL (Galli 2014) targeted a wide range of economic sectors and included a 16% share of interviewees from small companies. The results confirmed that Health and Safety Representatives were rarely involved in the assessment of work-related stress (30%), in breach of law provisions. Companies also tended not to honour obligation to regularly carry out training on the matter. Workers' representatives, however, seemed to be relatively well-informed about the characteristics of work-related stress and the related rules and regulations.

While workers' involvement in the assessment of work-related stress was reported only by 39% of respondents, a lower share of companies tried to use the assessment itself as a way to spread awareness on the need to prevent risks, by defining measures and targets jointly with workers.

Finally, about one out of five respondents reported that measures tackling work-related stress were in place in the company, though they were often confined to periodic monitoring.

As for Portugal, in the absence of official assessments, some partial assessment can be inferred from two relevant academic studies.

In particular, Correia et al. (2010) conducted a study on a sample of 94 primary education teachers of the Braga district, finding out career instability, long working hours and the fact of having older students as stress factors.

45% of the teachers reported they considered their job very stressing and 10.6% showed signs of burnout. The analysis did not find significant gender differences.

Rui Gomes et al. (2009) conducted a study on Portuguese nurses, so as to assess nurses' occupational stress in 286 hospitals and health centres. Stress sources, burnout, physical health problems, satisfaction and occupational fulfilment were analysed. The results showed that 30% of nurses experienced a significant amount of stress and 15% showed signs of emotional exhaustion. Multiple regression analyses proved greater ability to predict stress aspects in emotional exhaustion, physical health, satisfaction and occupational fulfilment. Comparative analyses showed greater stress problems and more negative reactions at work in the case of women, younger and inexperienced male nurses, fixed-term contract workers, as well as for workers performing shifts and overtime.

In Spain the National Institute of Safety and Health at Work (INSHT) carries out a National Survey on Working Conditions,

⁵The guidelines promoted an integrated approach to risk management, by envisaging two main assessment phases: a preliminary assessment (using a checklist for measuring sentinel events and job risks) and, in the event of a risk being detected, a subsequent in-depth assessment (using a validated questionnaire to collect workers' perceptions).

which attempts to quantify the percentage of workers concerned about various aspects relating to working conditions. The comparison between the 2012 and the 2007 results highlighted changes with reference to greater concern for their health, the relations with their colleagues and superiors and above all, the risk to lose their job. This concern for job instability is higher among very young workers, foreign workers, workers with a temporary contract, workers without completing primary education and workers in the construction and transport sectors. There are also Surveys on Working Conditions conducted by the Autonomous Communities, which follow the same line as the National Surveys so as to make comparisons easier.

The perception of Health and Psychosocial Risks was also analysed in 2013 by the Psychosocial Risks Observatory of the Spanish General Union of Workers (UGT) on the basis of a cross-sectoral sample, with the following main conclusions:

- 85.8 % of workers believed there were psychosocial risks at their workplace.
- 73.5 % of workers said that risk assessment was carried out in their company, but the percentage of assessments including psychological risks was only 39.2%. Those percentages were higher in companies with Health and Safety Committees and Prevention Delegates.
- As to the assessment of the exposure to psychosocial risk factors, 'personal development' was the most affected aspect in all fields of activity.
- Regarding the demand-control process as an indicator of work-related stress, the worst results were found in the health and education sectors.
- The jobs providing direct support to people were those with the worst stress risk indicators, especially in the case of workers with less seniority, with split-shift day and whose job requires them to be available outside normal working hours.
- As to the perception of health conditions and their relation with psychosocial risks, female workers had worse mental health compared to male workers, with significant differences.
- Worse mental health was reported among workers with high demand and low control, high emotional burden, shift work, working in weekends and during holidays, with a higher risk of internal or external violence.
- One out of three workers attributed their musculoskeletal conditions to the exposure to psychosocial risks.
- Psychopathologies were more common among female workers in the service sector.

The study drew the conclusion that addressing work-related stress was a priority not only due to legal requirements, but also due to the pressing nature of the problems faced by workers, and called for 'work-related mental illnesses' to be included in the list of occupational diseases as done by ILO (Tarín et al. 2013).

Tools to support monitoring of work-related stress in SMEs

An essential factor to support the actual assessment of work-related stress in SMEs is the presence of tools allowing to carry out an effective diagnosis thereof. In this regard, initiatives have been reported especially in Italy and France.

In Italy, the Verona University and the INAIL Occupational Safety and Health Inspection Service of the Veneto Region has developed a checklist for companies up to 30 employees and much used at regional level. The test is composed of 57 parameters including: sentinel events (accidents and absences, turnover rate, disputes...), job context (types of communication to the staff, clear definition of tasks, degree of workers' autonomy, etc.), work-life conciliation (possibility to reach the workplace with public transport services, opportunity to work part-time or to have flexible working time arrangements, etc.), job content (presence of risks concerning working environment and working equipment, task planning, workload, working time trends).

Box 1 – The Work-related Stress Checklist (CSL) for the management of Work-related stress in micro and small companies (Italy)

Design

The CSL is composed of 18 items, hinged around three main areas: 'Organizational culture', 'Workload', and 'Quality of relations and support'. The CSL entries include a frequency scale with four-step "undetermined" quantifiers (from 0 = Always to 3 = Never, plus the intermediate scores 1 = Often and 2 = Sometimes).

The items included in the CSL stem from a large and multi-faceted list, connected with several different thematic/generative areas: organizational climate at the workplace; distribution of workloads and clarity in the assigned tasks; possibility of influencing the way in which work is done; quality of relations and social support; involvement and information about changes and training, supply of skills necessary to carry out tasks.

Validation

The CSL was validated along with a set of objective indicators on a sample composed of over 1,000 workers from 136 companies, most of them operating in the manufacturing, construction and trade sector, and employing up to ten people.

The results prove that the work-related stress risk assessment can be performed with workers' involvement, also in micro- and small companies. While using the assessment of each individual worker as a starting point, the tool provides results that can also be aggregated and analysed in relation with the company's objective indicators.

In particular, logistic regressions confirms that the aggregation of items according to three different areas is coherent and reliable, and suggests that Organizational culture and Workload are good predictors of some objective indicators, such as the number of accidents at work.

Moreover, it is important to underline how, during the assessment process, every safety professional – including the employer – has a pivotal role, not merely in fulfilling a legal obligation, but also in view of spreading and promoting a health and safety culture (Nardella et al. 2011).

In France, alongside a set of measures aimed at raising awareness on the issue, the General Confederation of SMEs (CGPME, recently renamed Confederation of SMEs, CPME) has created a tool by which SMEs can self-assess their performance, self-train online and measure the progress made on the promotion of health and safety at work. The tool includes a specific section addressing psychosocial risk.

BOX 2 - The DIAGNEO-SANTE diagnostic tool and work-related stress (France)

Design

Diagnéo Santé is an on-line diagnostic tool for health and safety at work targeted to managers of micro and small-medium enterprises.

The diagnostic module is divided into 4 blocks, which can be run in multiple connections. Questions are multiple choice questions with four possible answers.

With a view to understand the texts more easily, users can click on technical terms in order to have access to their definition.

At the end of each module, a first result is made available under the form of a radar chart. With a view to obtaining the complete self-diagnosis result, users must complete all 4 modules. Seven different output profiles are available, namely: aware, claiming, centralizing, paternalistic, regulatory, contractual, involving.

Although the “involving” style is the most effective in the field of risk prevention, there is not a scale between the different values. Each profile has strengths and weaknesses. Self-diagnosis performs the state of art of risk prevention in the enterprise and starts an accompanying path/education/definition of action plan.

In view of helping users, the platform makes available a series of practical guidelines, training documents and useful links of additional diagnostic tools and official bodies which can assist and support companies in the prevention process.

The number of self-tests which can be conducted is unlimited. It is therefore possible and interesting to evaluate improvements by repeating the self-test after putting the action plan into practice.

Diagnosis of psycho-social risks

Psychosocial risks are analysed with a specific questionnaire (Questionnaire 4) addressing: inclusion of psychosocial risks in risk assessment; development of risk-reduction measures; funding of preventive measures; staff involvement in implementing measures.

The tool is available at: <http://www.diagneo-sante.com/>.

Social partners' role

Irrespective of the actual implementation of the agreement, social partners undertake a number of initiatives addressing work-related stress.

This report is not intended to provide a comprehensive description of the extent to which initiatives have been developed and undertaken, but just to quote some of them according to the partners' experience.

In particular, it should be noted that in Portugal the trade union UGT has organized media campaigns, workshops and trainings for workers' representatives.

For example, the Transport Workers Union (SITRA, affiliated to UGT) developed an awareness raising and information campaign on stress known as “Remove stress before it kills you”, targeted to public transport and long-distance drivers. The UGT-affiliated union representing Industry and Energy workers (SINDEL) signed a collective bargaining agreement

with EDP, the biggest electricity utility in Portugal. Under this Agreement an awareness raising and information campaign on issues related to the promotion of workers' health was developed in EDP, with specific reference to stress, prevention/information on alcohol consumption, obesity and smoking-related risks.

In UGT's view, the Agreement had an impact on raising the issue and stimulating discussion on the work-related stress in union's environment. In this regard, the EDP campaign was a step forward in employers' commitment and could be an interesting test to deploy similar initiatives on a wider scale.

In Italy, the most important unions at national and local levels organized trainings for Health and Safety Representatives, providing information on work-related stress and on the methods to evaluate such risk.

In addition, the main trade unions' confederations have recently conducted their surveys among Health and Safety Representatives so as to assess to what extent and how stress is addressed at company level (for further information, please see the paragraph above).

Similarly, in Greece, unions organized both information seminars on work-related stress addressed to employees and training for union members with a view to having this issue properly addressed in collective bargaining negotiations at company and industry-wide levels.

In France, employers' organisations actually played an active role in detecting and combating work-related stress, by means of information and training campaigns, often addressed to SMEs. Those actions included the prevention of all psychosocial risks. Specific training sessions were organised to assist SMEs to comply with regulations on stress at work. For example, for several years CPME has been organizing training sessions on "health preservation in companies" so as to help its members to implement preventive actions and deal with documented cases. As described above, CPME has also offered a specific diagnostic tool for SMEs.

At national level, it is worth noting that social partners signed a collective agreement in April 2014, obliging employees to disconnect and switch off remote communication devices during the 11-hour minimum daily rest periods.

Social partners are also members of the National Agency for improving working conditions (ANACT), a tripartite national agency, with the task of contributing to improve working conditions in SMEs, especially by taking actions on work organization and industrial relations.

ANACT leads a network of local agencies (ARACT) proposing actions within companies to strengthen the local actors' abilities to consider work challenges well beyond mere legal obligations. As to the prevention of psychosocial risks, ANACT and ARACT support companies in assessing working conditions and work organisation, by also adopting a specific approach developed by ANACT.

The network also organizes awareness raising activities including workshops and the on-line publication of information on the topic and methodological tools to assess work-related stress.

In Spain, social partners extensively addressed work-related stress in collective bargaining agreements and, at national level, by participating in the drafting of the Spanish Occupational Health and Safety Strategy.

The second Strategy was adopted by the Government on April 2015 and applies to the 2015-2020 period. The document, drawn up jointly with social partners and Autonomous Regions, is intended to be a basis for improving and strengthening public policies in the fields of risk prevention and safety at work. The aims of the Strategy include improving the enforcement of health and safety legislation, notably in the SMEs, and also preventing work-related diseases. Hence it must be flexible enough to adapt to changes underway and envisage possible risk factors such as the level of attention required for performing a task, work pace and workload, poor communication or monotonous and repetitive tasks among others, which may give rise to industrial accidents and occupational diseases.

As to collective agreements, in some cases, agreements connected work-related stress with 'triggers' to be monitored for preventive purposes, such as the organisation of working time - as in the agreement covering the Industry, Technology and Services in the Metal Sector of the Valencia Province and in the one covering air traffic controllers - or linked stress

prevention with the length of rest periods, as in the national agreement of the non-daily press sector. Other agreements mention 'work-related stress' as part of the training for preventing of health and safety risks, such as the national agreement applicable to the call centre sector, or as part of 'corporate responsibility', as in some company-level agreements.

A similar approach was highlighted by the Lithuanian Solidarity Trade Union (LPS – Solidarumas), noting to what extent unions were striving to address work-related stress concerns when negotiating working time organisation or measures concerning work/life conciliation, remote working, and time-offs.

In Romania, Lithuania and Hungary, social partners jointly developed awareness-raising campaign in the framework of OSHA campaigns. As reported by MOSz, in Hungary the campaign also highlighted the positive effects on employees and companies of properly handling work-related stress and provided tools to manage health and safety problems at the workplace relating to the ageing workforce.

Chapter 4. Survey on workers, workers' representatives and employers

The questionnaire REST@Work

The questionnaire has been carried out in line with the general aims of the project, for comparative purposes both at national level and on the company subjects: employers, health and safety representatives and workers.

More specifically, the aims can be placed along the following analysis levels which are closely interwoven:

- a) to take stock of the state of the art of work-related stress risk assessment, by implementing possible preventive measures and paying attention to the differences between small, medium and large companies;
- b) to assess the key aspects in the process of involving the various actors;
- c) to detect the conditions which pose the greatest problems for the work environment.

The structured questionnaire (consisting of "multiple choice" questions) is specifically designed, starting initially from a comparison based on the analysis of reference literature, so as to later analyse European and national surveys through the benchmarking procedure (see Eurofound, 2012; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010).

As already mentioned, the questionnaire has been designed for three types of subjects: employers, health and safety representatives and workers. More specifically, the areas investigated are the following: socio-biographical and employment profile; state of the art of the work-related stress assessment; training / information of workers and health and safety representatives; involvement of workers and health and safety representatives in assessing work-related stress; characteristics of the work environment; conditions of the work environment; perception of the work environment; level of occupational well-being / stress and discomfort.

Also the pre-test of the reporting system has been carried out: the research team has tested the operation of the questionnaire through its administration to a sub-sample of subjects with the same characteristics of the case studies existing in the partners' network.

The survey sample

With specific reference to the choice of the subjects to whom the questionnaire was to be administered, it was decided to use fixed quota sampling, which is preferable when the research priority aims focus on comparative goals and the analysis of relations between variables (De Carlo, Robust, 1996).

The sample was stratified according to the type of subject involved (employers, workers' representatives, workers) and the company size (micro, small and medium-sized enterprise). By combining the two criteria, along with the share of interviews envisaged (n = 200), we got a stratification of the sample into 6 types.

For each type it was decided to set a variable share of interviews (20%, 20%, 60%) so that the number of sub-groups identifiable was not lower than a minimum threshold of 40 units (Table 2).

The sample design is a "non-probability snowball sampling" (Bailey, 1995). With a view to achieving the required quorum, this technique requires that social partners take steps to recruit the initial sampling units that, in turn, will work actively to find additional ones, and so on and so forth.

Table 1 – Distribution of the sample by type of subject involved and size of the company

	Micro (up to 9 employees)	Small (from 10 to 49 employees)	Medium (from 50 to 250 employees)	Tot.
Employers (20%)	6	14	20	20
Workers' representatives (20%)	6	14	20	20
Workers (60%)	18	42	60	60
Tot.	30	70	100	100

Data analysis

The analysis of questionnaires was carried out by using the statistical software SPSS version 18.

As to the questions about socio-demographic and labour aspects, absolute frequencies and percentages on the total sample were calculated. Double entry tables were also created to identify the relations existing between the different variables.

As to the questions for which an average value was calculated, the ANOVA test was applied to check the existence of statistically significant differences in the mean values calculated in the various groups in which the sample was divided. A description of the main results obtained is reported below, with insights relating to some comparisons that proved to be significant on the basis of statistical tests.

Results

Socio-demographic and employment data

Respondents are workers, health and safety representatives and employers coming from the countries which participated in the project for a total of 1,310 respondents of whom 855 are workers, 289 are health and safety representatives and 166 are employers. With regard to the nationality of respondents, the most significant number of workers comes from Italy (n = 144), followed by Portugal (n = 143), Hungary (n = 124) and Spain (N = 121).

As to health and safety representatives, the most significant number comes from Italy (n = 77), France (n = 49), Spain (N = 40) and Greece (N = 39). Finally, as to employers, the most significant number comes from Spain (N = 40), Italy (N = 34) and Lithuania (N = 26) (Table 2). The sample is distributed across all sectors with a primary focus on the manufacturing sector (workers = 12.4%; health and safety representatives = 30.1%; employers = 13.2%); on the service sector (workers = 23.9 %; health and safety representatives = 17.2%; employers = 27%); on healthcare and social assistance (workers = 8.9%; health and safety representatives = 10%; employers = 7.5%); on construction (workers = 5, 9%; health and safety representatives = 4.3%; employers = 9.4%) and trade (workers = 5.1%; health and safety representatives = 4.7%; employers = 8.8%) (Table 3).

Tab. 2 – Ripartizione per nazione e soggetti intervistati (val. ass.)

	Workers	Health and safety representatives	Employers
Italy	144	77	34
Spain	121	40	40
France	82	49	18
Hungary	124	32	6
Lituania	68	22	26
Romania	113	22	11
Greece	60	39	20
Portugal	143	8	11
Total	855	289	166

Table 3 – Breaking down by sector and subject interviewed (%)

	Workers	Health and safety representatives	Employers
A) Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	1,4	2,2	1,3
B) Mineral extraction from quarries and mines	1,2	0,4	0
C) Manufacturing activities	12,4	30,1	13,2
D) Supply of electricity, gas, as well as steam and air conditioning	2,1	3,2	0
E) Supply of water; sewage; waste disposal, cleaning and rehabilitation activities	1,4	2,9	0
F) Building	5,9	4,3	9,4
G) Wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles and motor cycles	5,1	4,7	8,8
H) Transport, storage and warehousing	4,6	4,7	4,4
I) Accommodation and catering services	5,6	2,2	8,2
J) Information and communication services	3,0	1,4	1,3
K) Financial and insurance services	1,7	2,9	1,3
L) Real estate	0,6	0	0
M) Professional, scientific and technical activities	7,4	5,0	5,0
N) Car hiring, travel agencies, as well as services to support companies	0,6	0,7	0,6
O) Public administration and defence; mandatory social insurance	6,4	4,3	2,5

P) Education	6,1	2,5	8,2
Q) Healthcare and social assistance	8,9	10,0	7,5
R) Art, sport, entertainment and leisure activities	0,9		0,6
S) Other service activities	23,9	17,2	27,0
T) Activities of families and couples as employers for domestic staff	0,2	0	0,6
U) Extraterritorial organisations and associations	0,5	0,4	0
V) Other sectors	0,1	1,1	0
Total	100	100	100

Most of the companies are medium-sized: in the group from 50 to 250 employees, workers account for 45.2%, health and safety representatives 66.3% and employers 38.9%; in the group from 10 to 49 employees, workers account for 29.3%, health and safety representatives 14.2 and employers 37%; in the micro-companies group (below 9 employees), workers account for 12.1%, health and safety representatives 18.8% and employers 23.5%.

Finally, in the group of companies over 250 employees, workers account for 13.3%, health and safety representatives 0.7% and employers 0.6% (Table 4).

Table 4 – Companies by number of employees and subjects interviewed (%)

	Workers	Health and safety representatives	Employers
below 9	12,1	18,8	23,5
from 10 to 49	29,3	14,2	37
from 50 to 250	45,2	66,3	38,9
over 250	13,3	0,7	0,6
Total	100	100	100

Most companies are private companies with workers accounting for 73.5%, health and safety representatives 71.2% and employers 75.6%; the remaining companies are public ones, non-profit organizations and cooperatives (Table 5).

As to workers, the employment status is skilled worker in 28.5% of cases and employee in 29.9% of cases; as to health and safety representatives the employment status is skilled worker in 28.3% of cases and employee in 34.3% of cases (Table 6).

Table 5 – Type of company and subject interviewed (%)

	Workers	Health and safety representatives	Employers
Public	11,3	12,8	10
Private	73,5	71,2	75,6
No profit	9,2	3,9	7,5
Cooperative	1,1	1,1	1,3
Other types	4,9	11	5,6
Total	100	100	100

Tab. 6 – Type of job and subject interviewed (%)

	Workers	Health and safety representatives
Skilled worker	28,5	28,3
Unskilled worker	15,5	12,9
Employee	29,9	34,3
Middle manager	14	18,5
Manager	12,2	5,9
Total	100	100

Respondents are in most cases men and the education level differs based on the type of subject interviewed (Chart 1). For example, 35.9% of workers, 26% of health and safety representatives and 33.7% of employers have a degree, while 10.2% of workers, 9.7% of health and safety representatives and 16.9 of employers have a post-graduate specialization (Chart 2).

Chart 1 – Breaking down by gender and subject interviewed (%)

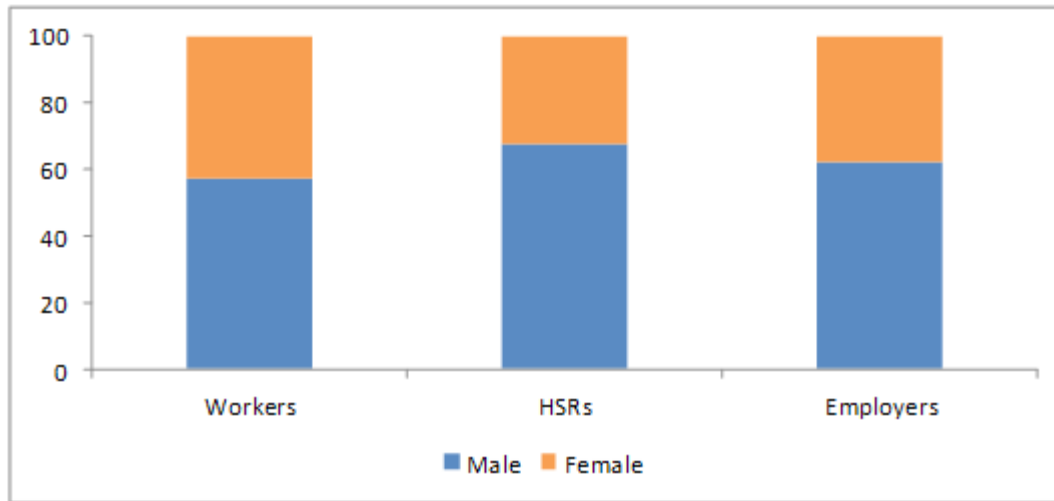
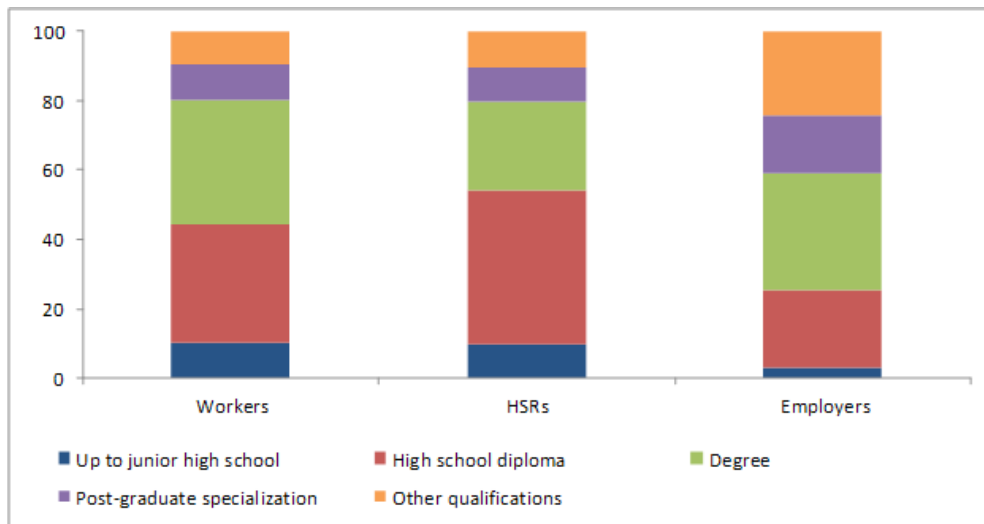


Chart 2 – Breaking down by qualification and subject interviewed (%)



While analyzing workers' personal data of workers, we realize that 39.5% has an age ranging between 31 and 45 and 47% are aged over 46. The most used type of contract is the open-ended contract and in 9% of cases it is full-time. Finally the type of work is daily in 78% of cases and shift work in nearly 18% of cases analyzed (Table 7).

Tab. 7 . Distribuzione per dati personali e lavorativi (val. %)

Age bracket	Lavoratori
from 18 to 30	13,1
from 31 to 45	39,2
from 46 to 55	24,3
over 55	23,5
Type of contract	Lavoratori
Open-ended contract	79,4
Fixed-term contract	9,2
Temporary agency work	9,3
Other types	2,1
Working time	Lavoratori
Full-time	88,9
Part-time	8,3
Without working time constraints	2,8
Type of work organization	Lavoratori
Daily	78,0
Shifts	17,8
Regular night shifts	0,7
Other types	3,5

State of the art of the work-related stress assessment

In the second part of the questionnaire the three types of subjects (workers, health and safety representatives and employers) were asked to pass a judgment on the state of the art of work-related stress risk assessment, with the implementation of possible preventive measures and attention paid to the differences between small, medium and large companies. In addition, questions were designed to deepen the assessment and management of the various risks within the company and have again a judgment on the degree of involvement in the evaluation and management system. The

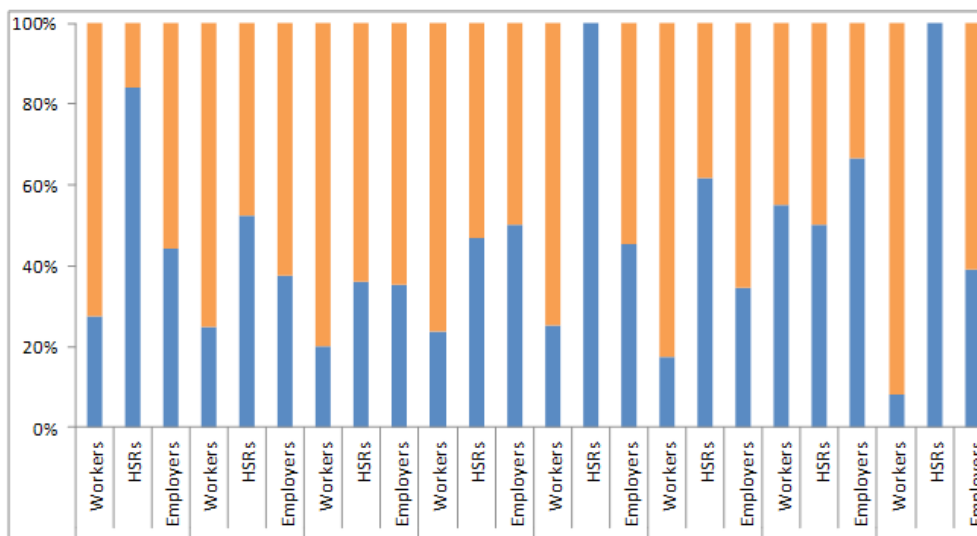
purpose was to understand the overall context in which the work-related stress risk assessment occurred in the various countries.

In most cases, the judgments on knowledge about the European Framework Agreement on work-related stress were negative, with some exceptions in the case of health and safety representatives and employers in some of the countries surveyed.

More specifically, workers reported scores above 70% (in all cases except for Romania) in stating that they did not know the Framework Agreement, with peaks of 91.4% in Greece, 82.4% in Lithuania and 80% in France.

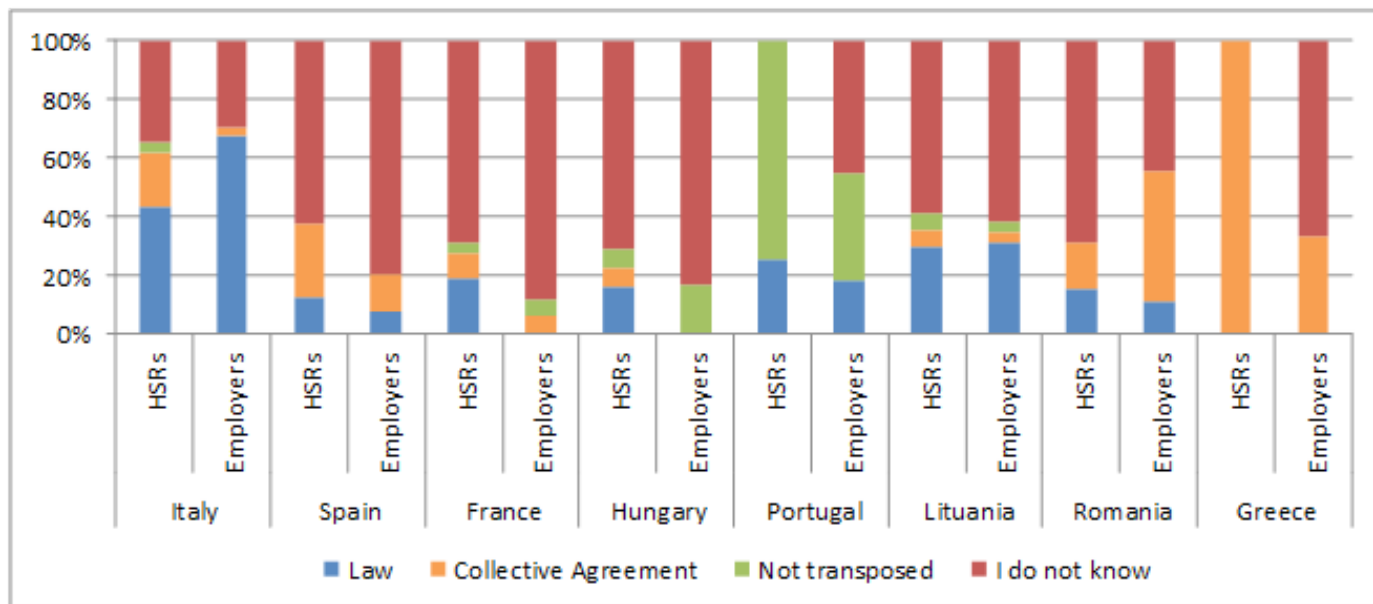
A different judgment was passed by health and safety representatives: in fact they seemed to be the most knowledgeable, both compared to workers and employers, with high percentages in Greece and Portugal (100%, respectively), followed by Italy with 84.2% and Lithuania with 61.9%. Finally, also employers had a greater degree of knowledge although in 7 out of 8 countries they recorded a higher percentage than the average with reference to the statement denying knowledge about the agreement on work-related stress. Specifically, only in Romania - in 66.7% of cases declared to be aware of it, while in Lithuania (65.4%), France (64.7%) and Spain (62.5%) they said they did not know it (Chart 3).

Chart 3 – Knowledge about the European Framework Agreement on work-related stress (%)



Further evidence of the low level of knowledge was shown in the answers to the question aimed at understanding how the Agreement had been implemented in their countries (eg.: laws, territorial agreements, etc.). In particular, many countries showed a very high percentage in the answer “I do not know.” In Spain this is the case for 62.5% health and safety representatives and 80% employers who said they did not know how the agreement was transposed. In France the percentages were 68.8% for health and safety representatives and 88.2% for employers, while in Hungary they were 71% and 83.3%, respectively. (Chart 4)

Chart 4 - Knowledge about the transposition of the European Framework Agreement on work-related stress (%)



By analyzing whether the assessment of work-related stress in companies had been made, we could show that there were differences if we considered both the different type of subjects (workers, workers' representatives and employers) and countries.

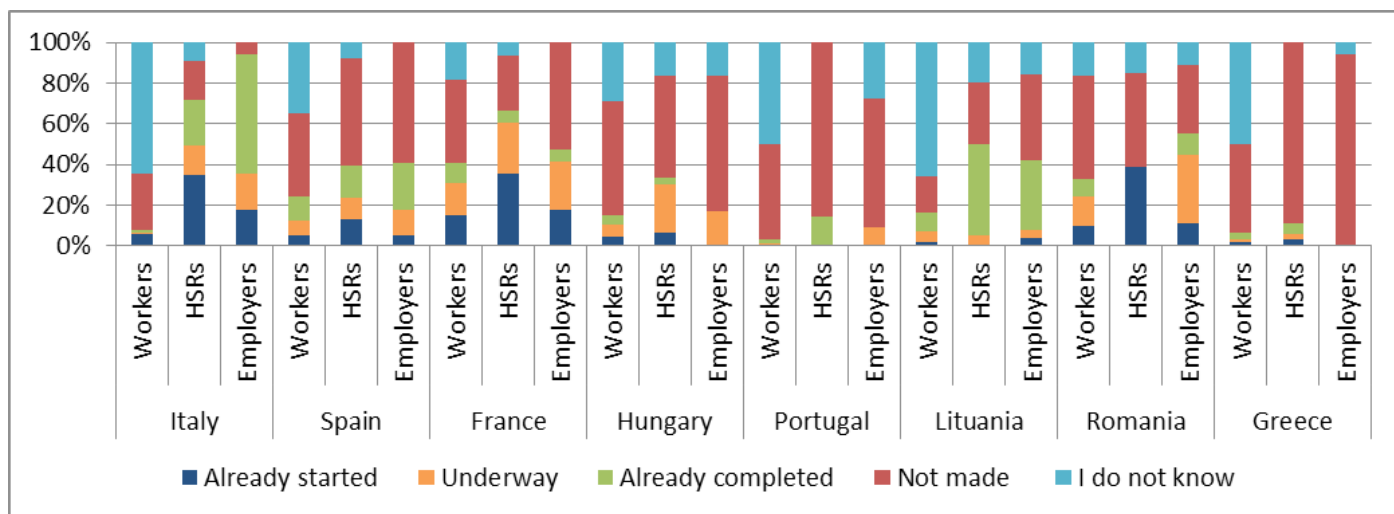
In fact, if we consider workers' answers, we realize that in most countries workers (6 out of 8) stated it was never made, with percentages ranging from 40% to 56%. Others answered it was completed, although with lower percentages as was the case with Spain (11.6%), France (9.9%), Lithuania (8.8%) and Romania (8.8%). Others reported it was underway such as France (16%), Romania (14.3%), Spain (7.4%), Hungary (6.1%) and Lithuania (5.9%). Finally it was reported it was initiated in France (14.8%), Romania (9.9%), Italy (5.7%), Spain (5%) and Hungary (4.4%).

If we analyse the answers provided by health and safety representatives, we can see that in most countries workers (5 out of 8) stated it had never been made, with percentages ranging from 50% to 89%. As to the statement whereby the assessment had already been completed, we have Lithuania (45%), Italy (22%), Spain (nearly 16%) and Portugal (nearly 14%). It was reported it was underway in France (25%), Hungary (23.3%), Italy (14.3%) and Spain (10.5%). Finally it was reported to have been completed in Italy and France (35%), Romania (38%) and Spain (13%).

Finally, according to employers, we can see that in most countries workers (6 out of 8) stated that the assessment of work-related stress had never been made, with percentages ranging from 42% to 94%.

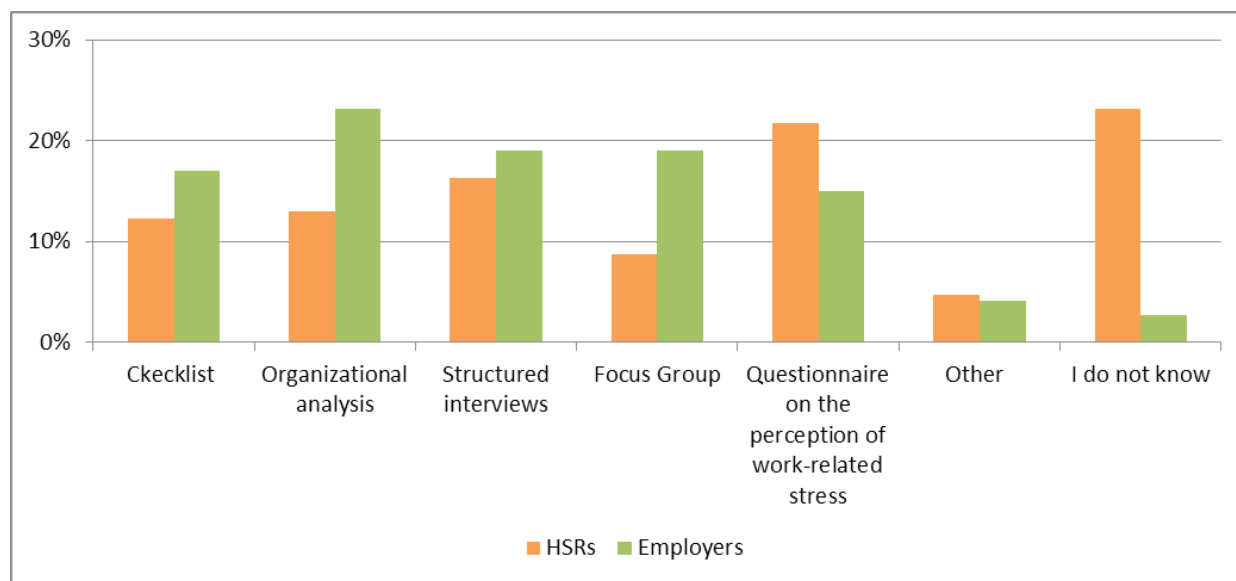
It was reported it had already been completed in Italy (58.8% of cases), Lithuania (34.6%) and Spain (23.1%). On the contrary it was underway in many countries: Romania (33.3%), France (23.5%), Italy (17.6%), Hungary (16.7%) and Spain (12.8%). Finally it was completed in Italy and France (7.6%), respectively, Romania (11.1%) and Spain (5%) (Chart 5).

Chart 5 – Assessment of work-related stress in companies (%)



With regard to the methods used to assess work-related stress, we noted that questionnaires administered to workers on the perception of work-related stress were quite used, with percentages of 21.7% in the case of health and safety representatives and 15% in the case of employers, followed by organizational analysis (13% in the case of health and safety representatives and 23% in the case of employers); structured interviews (16.3% in the case of health and safety representatives and 19% in the case of employers) and finally check-lists (12% in the case of health and safety and 17% in the case of employers) (Chart 6).

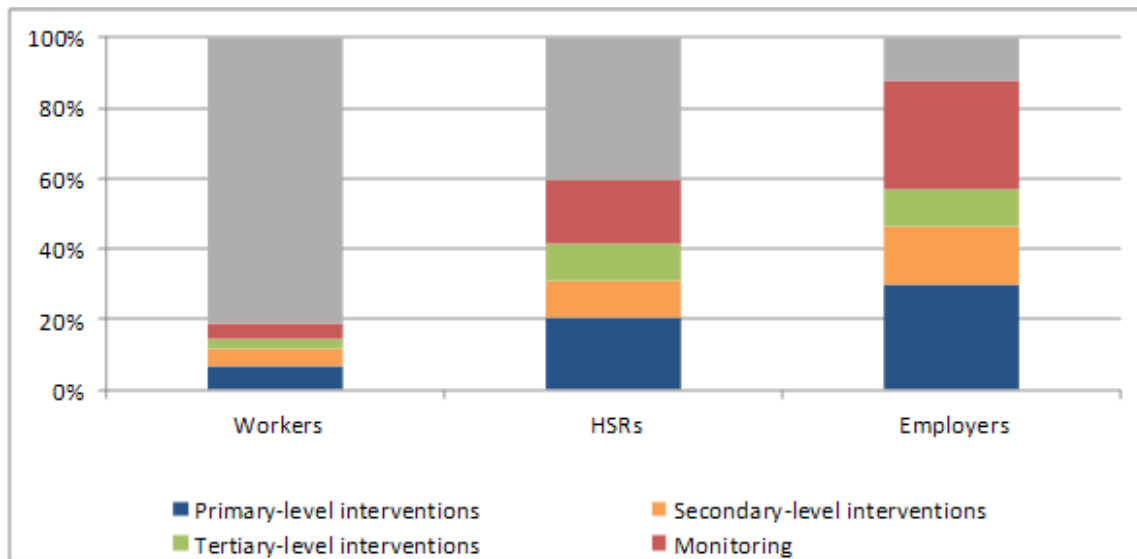
Chart 6 – Methods used to carry out the assessment of work-related stress (%)



With specific reference to the actions taken following the assessment of work-related stress, we noted that 81.3% of the sample reported not to be aware of them, while 6.5% said that primary prevention measure were taken (ie, actions to combat stressors in work organization). 4.9% of the sample stated secondary prevention measures were taken (collective actions to help workers to deal with stress), while almost 3% reported that tertiary prevention measures were taken (measures to support workers in distress). Finally 4.5% reported that a periodic monitoring program had been started. 40.3% of health and safety representatives did not know whether management interventions were started, while 20.3% said primary prevention measures had been started. 10.8% reported that secondary prevention measures were taken, while 10.4% reported that tertiary prevention measures were taken. Finally 18.2% said that a monitoring program was started.

Employers seem to be more knowledgeable: in fact, only 12.3% said they did not know whether measures were taken; 29.8% reported that primary prevention measures were implemented, while 16.7% reported that secondary prevention measures were taken. 10.5% said tertiary prevention measures were implemented and finally 30.7% said that a monitoring program has been started (Chart 7).

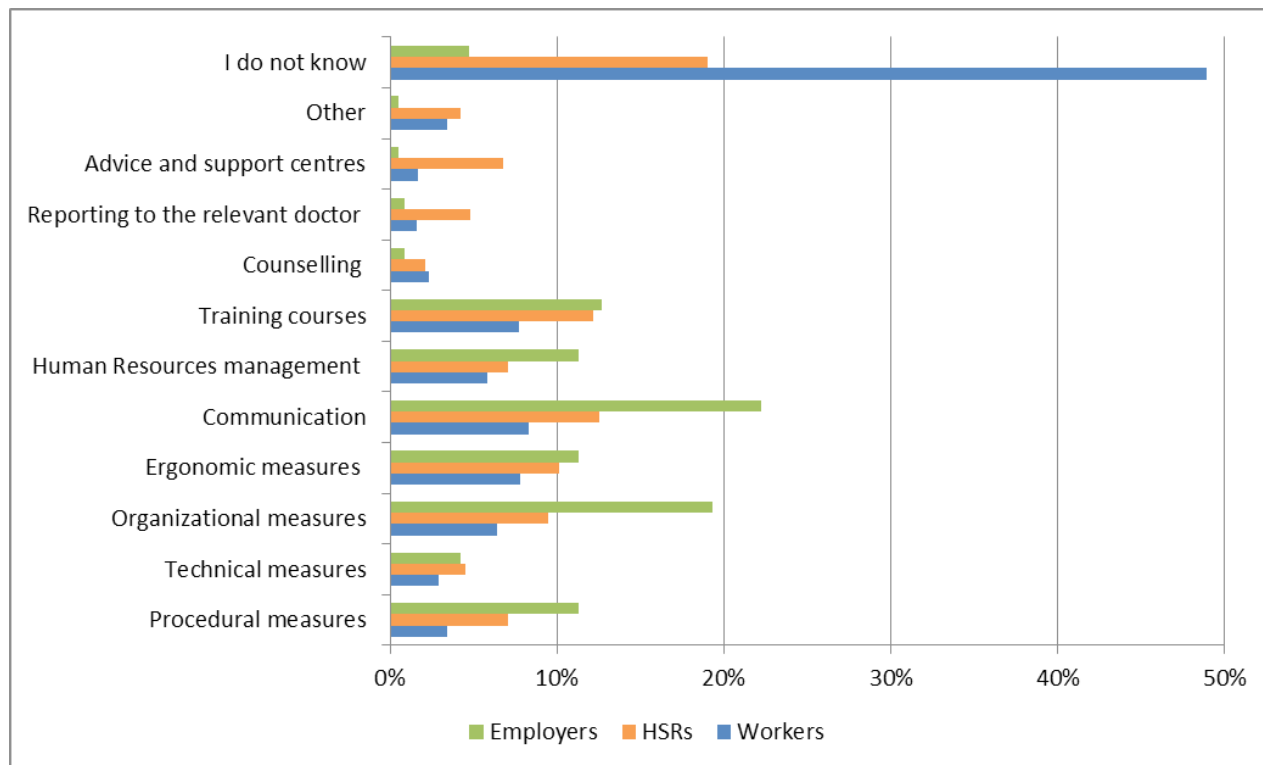
Chart 7 – Ways to manage and / or monitor the risk of work-related stress (%)



We analyse prevention measures in detail, we realize that almost 50% of workers did not know what actions had been undertaken. In the case of health and safety representatives, the percentage dropped to 19% and to 4.7% in the case of employers. The most widely used intervention appeared to be training: in fact it was chosen by workers in 7.7% of cases, by health and safety representatives in 12.2% of cases and by employers in 12.7% of cases. In addition to training, we saw measures to improve internal communication chosen by workers in 8.3% of cases, by health and safety representatives in 12.5% of cases and by employers in 22.2% of cases.

They were followed by ergonomic measures (design / redesign of the environment and work processes) chosen by workers in 7.8% of cases, by health and safety representatives in 10.1% of cases and finally by employers in 11.3% of cases (Chart 8).

Chart 8 – Preventive measures adopted following the assessment of work-related stress [%]



Involvement of workers and health and safety representatives

While analysing the answers provided by health and safety representatives, we note that 13.9% reported they were not aware of the ways in which workers were involved and 15.5% said that awareness raising and / or information campaigns before the assessment were carried out. 8.2% of respondents reported that awareness raising and / or information campaigns after the assessment were carried out, while 8% stated that training was provided after the risk assessment. 16.1% stated they were involved through questionnaires for the subjective assessment of work-related stress, but nearly 11% reported they were not involved at all. Finally only 6.6% of health and safety representatives stated they were involved. If we consider the employers' answers, we note that in 16.2% of cases training was provided after the risk assessment and in 13.8% of cases awareness-raising and / or information campaigns before the assessment were carried out. In 12.6% of cases awareness raising and / or information campaigns following the assessment were carried out and finally, in 13.8% of cases, the workers were involved through the use of questionnaires for the subjective assessment of work-related stress.

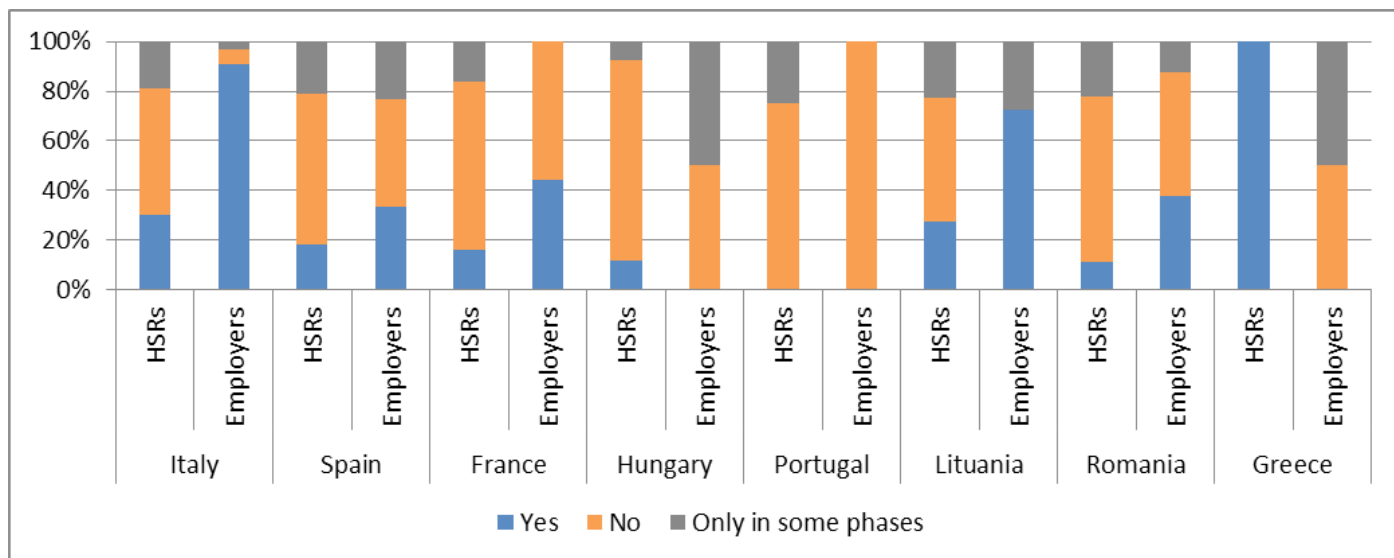
It is interesting to note that when asked whether workers had been involved in the proposed solutions and / or monitoring, only 2.7% of workers answered they were involved. For health and safety representatives this happened in 5.1% of cases, while for employers, the percentage rose to 11.4% (Chart 9).

Chart 9 – Ways to involve workers in assessing work-related stress in companies (%)



A further aspect is the degree of involvement of health and safety representatives in assessing work-related stress. If we analyse the breaking down according to the position held in the various countries (health and safety representatives or employers), we see that mixed judgments were passed. Italy is a case in point: 30.4% of health and safety representatives reported they were involved in the assessment of work-related stress while for employers the degree of involvement of health and safety workers was allegedly 90.6%. This also happens in Spain although with lower percentages, where 18.4% of health and safety representatives reported they were involved and employers said this happened in 33.3% of cases. The trend is the same in France: 16.3% of health and safety representatives answered they were involved as against 44.4% of employers. In the other countries we have additional problems: in fact, in Hungary only 11.5% of health and safety representatives reported they were involved while 50% of employers stated they did not involve health and safety representatives or did so only in some phases. In Portugal we have a situation of non-involvement: health and safety representatives stated they were not involved in 75% of cases, while in 25% of cases they were involved only in some phases. For 100% of employers the involvement never took place. In Lithuania we find a situation similar to the previous ones: health and safety representatives were involved in 27% of cases compared to the 72% of cases reported by employers. In Romania health and safety representatives were involved in 11% of cases, while employers were involved in 37% of cases. Finally in Greece we recorded full involvement (100%) of health and safety representatives while, for employers, in 50% of cases there was no involvement and in the remaining 50% of cases it occurred only at certain stages (Chart 10).

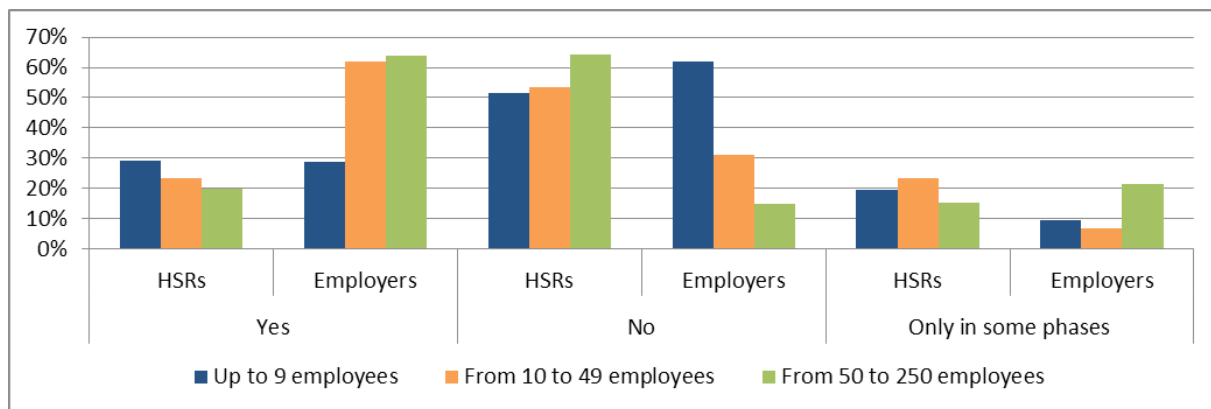
Chart 10 – Involvement of health and safety representatives in assessing work-related stress (%)



A further aspect relating to the degree of health and safety representatives' active participation in assessing work-related stress is to consider whether the company size (micro, small or medium-sized company) is a factor differentiating the ways in which they are involved.

When analysing data we noted that for health and safety representatives - even though the different company sizes were considered - the percentages of non-involvement varied little: in fact, they ranged from 51% in micro-enterprises (up to 9 employees) to almost 65% in medium-sized companies (50-250 employees). On the contrary, for employers, involvement changed based on the company size. In fact, 62% of employers said they did not involve health and safety representatives in companies with less than 9 employees. 31% stated health and safety representatives were involved in companies with a number of employees between 10 and 49 and involvement fell to 15% in larger companies (50-250 employees). Hence, according to employers as the number of employees in companies increased, there was greater involvement of health and safety representatives (Chart 11).

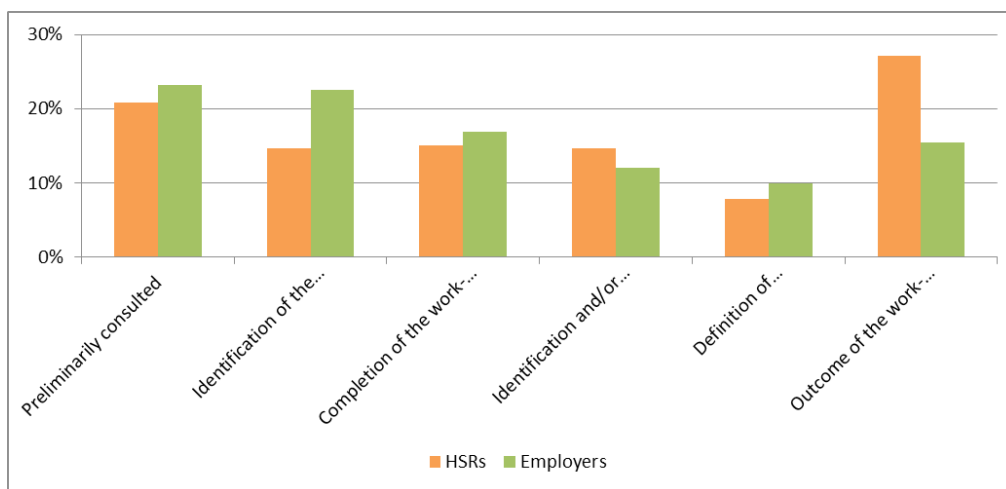
Chart 11 – Involvement of health and safety representatives in assessing work-related stress, broken down by health and safety representatives and employers, as well as company size [%]



Considering the different phases of the process designed to assess work-related stress, we could see that in 27% of cases it resulted that health and safety representatives were involved only in the final stage of knowledge about the outcome of the assessment results. Approximately 21% participated in the consultation prior to the assessment, while 15% of health and safety representatives reported they were involved in the whole process. 14.6% stated they were involved both in the phase designed to identify the assessment pathway and in the phase for identifying and planning interventions.

As regards employers, they stated they involved health and safety representatives in most cases in the preliminary consultation (23.2% of cases) and in the phase for identifying the assessment pathway (22.5% of cases). Nearly 17% reported they involved them in the whole assessment pathway and in 15.5% of cases they stated they involved them in the outcome of the assessment results. Finally, almost 13% of employers stated that HSRs participate in the definition of intervention programs and approximately 10% also stated they involved them in the definition of training / information pathways (Chart 12).

Chart 12 – Involvement of health and safety representatives in the various assessment phases of work-related stress [%]



When analysing the different company subjects more involved in the process of assessing work-related stress, we noted that for HSRs, in 25.5% of cases, the subject most involved was the Health & Safety Manager (HSM), followed by the employer (20% of cases), the relevant Physician (almost 16% of cases), the external consultant (13% of cases) and the Human Resources Manager (10% of cases). For employers, the most involved subject was the Health & Safety Manager in 29% of cases, followed by the employer in 26% of cases, the relevant Physician in 18% of cases, the external consultant (nearly 12% of cases) and the Human Resources Manager (8% of cases) (Chart 13).

Considering who the external consultant was, we could see that for 17% of health and safety representatives he/she was an occupational psychologist and for 12.5% of them he/she was a labour consultant. Also for employers he/she was the occupational psychologist (14.6%) and the labour consultant (18.8%).

The various subjects included also the occupational sociologist and the management engineer but, in both cases and for both subjects interviewed (HSRs and employers) the percentage did not exceed 3%. Finally, for 12.5% of HSRs and 33% of employers, another professional subject in addition to those mentioned was the labor consultant (Chart 14).

Chart 13 – Subjects involved in the assessment (%)

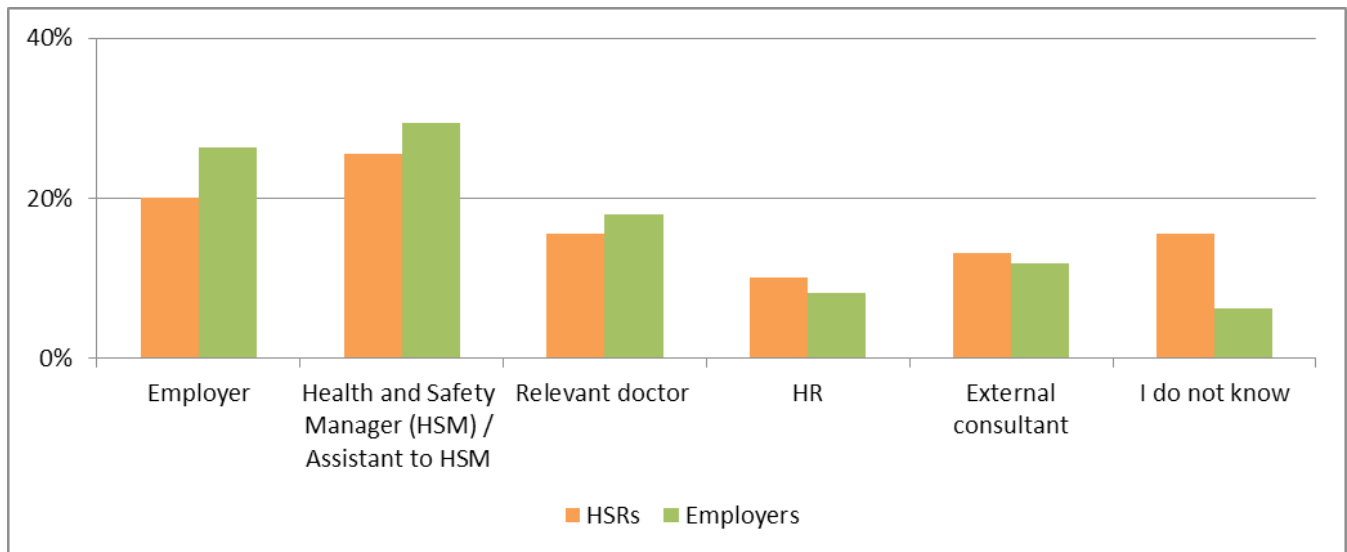
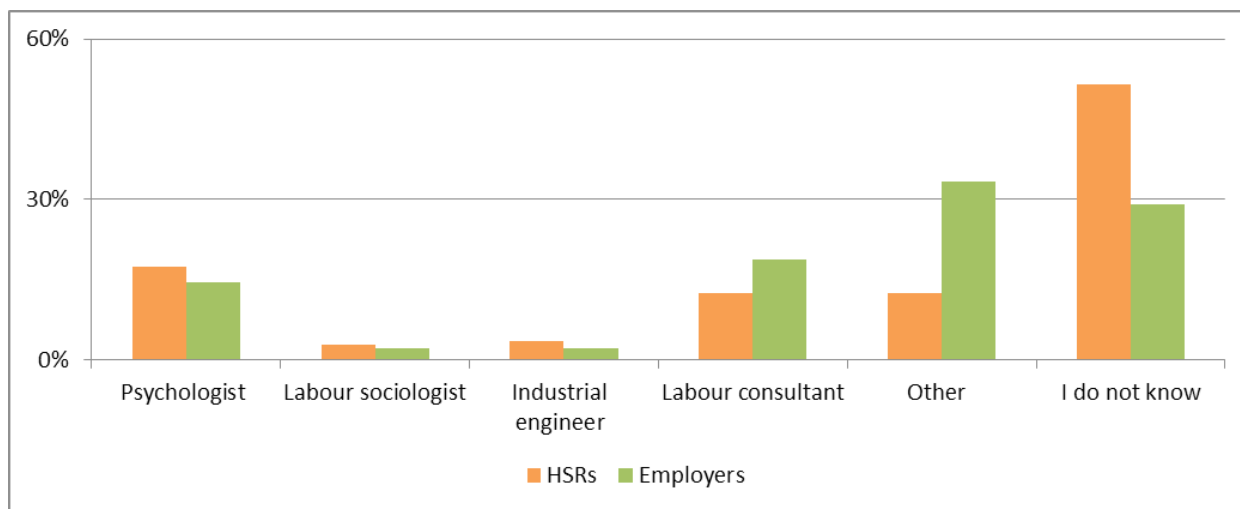


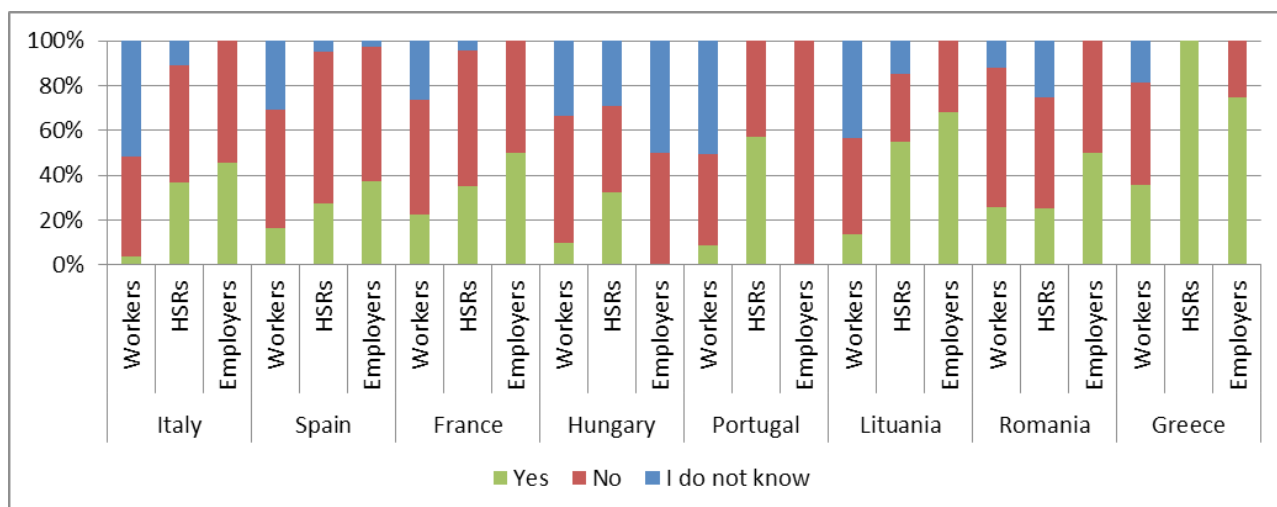
Chart 14 – External consultant involved in the assessment (%)



Workers' training and information

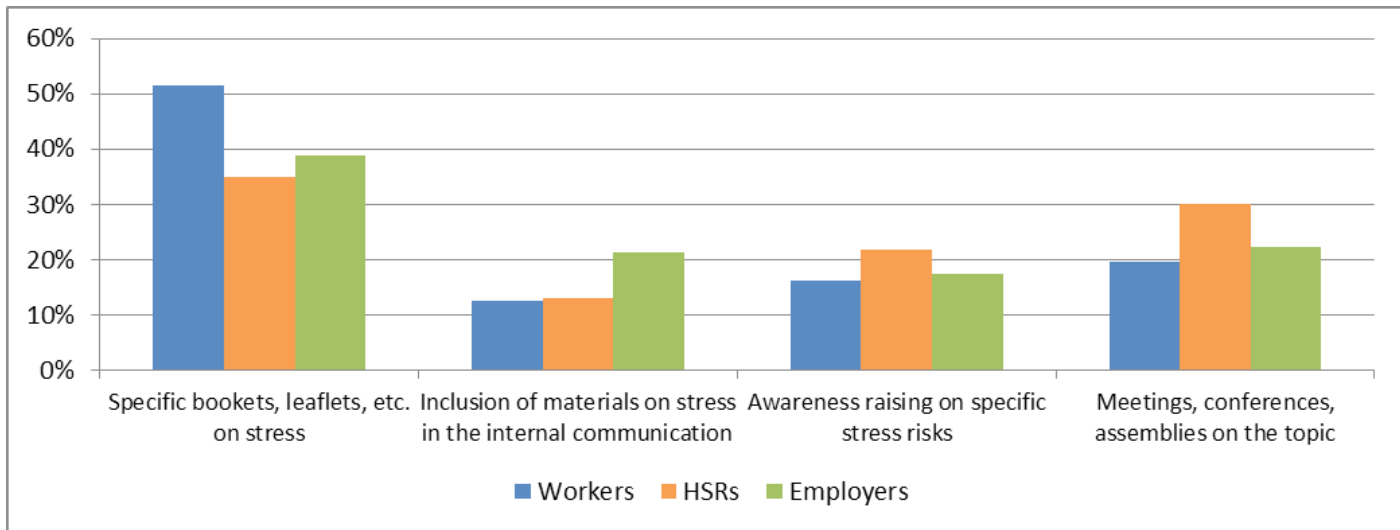
Another aspect investigated by the questionnaire is the training and information on the risks of work-related stress. More generally we asked whether the company had undertaken initiatives designed to raise awareness on the issue. The results showed that, by comparing the different countries, there was agreement between the different subjects. In fact, in most countries workers showed percentages of affirmative answers lower than HSRs and employers. Hence, according to HSRs and employers, initiatives to raise awareness on work-related stress were undertaken (Chart 15)

Chart 15 – Public awareness initiatives on work-related stress (%)



The various methods and tools used for raising awareness included specific booklets, brochures, etc. on the topic of stress for 51.6% of workers; those methods and tools were used for 35% of HSRs and 38.8% of employers. 12.6% of workers reported that information on stress was integrated into the internal communication, compared to 13% of HSRs and 21.4% of employers. Slightly more than 16% of workers stressed that awareness-raising interventions on the specific stress-related risks were carried out; this was also confirmed by 22% of HSRs and 17.5% of employers. Finally, 19.5% of workers reported that the methods used were meetings, conferences and assemblies on the topic; that percentage rose to 30% for HSRs and to 22.3% for employers [Chart 16]

Chart 16 – Methods and tools designed to increase awareness on work-related stress (%)



Nevertheless workers reported that no appropriate specific company training was carried out for them on the risk of work-related stress. In fact 82% of them did not participate in any specific course; 11% tackled the topic of work-related stress only in general courses on occupational health and safety and only 7% attended specific courses on work-related stress [Chart 17].

When considering training for HSRs, 23% of them did not attend any course on the topic, while 64% of them was trained on it but only with generic notions and only 13% carried out specific training on work-related stress [Chart 18].

Chart 17 – Workers' training on work-related stress (%)

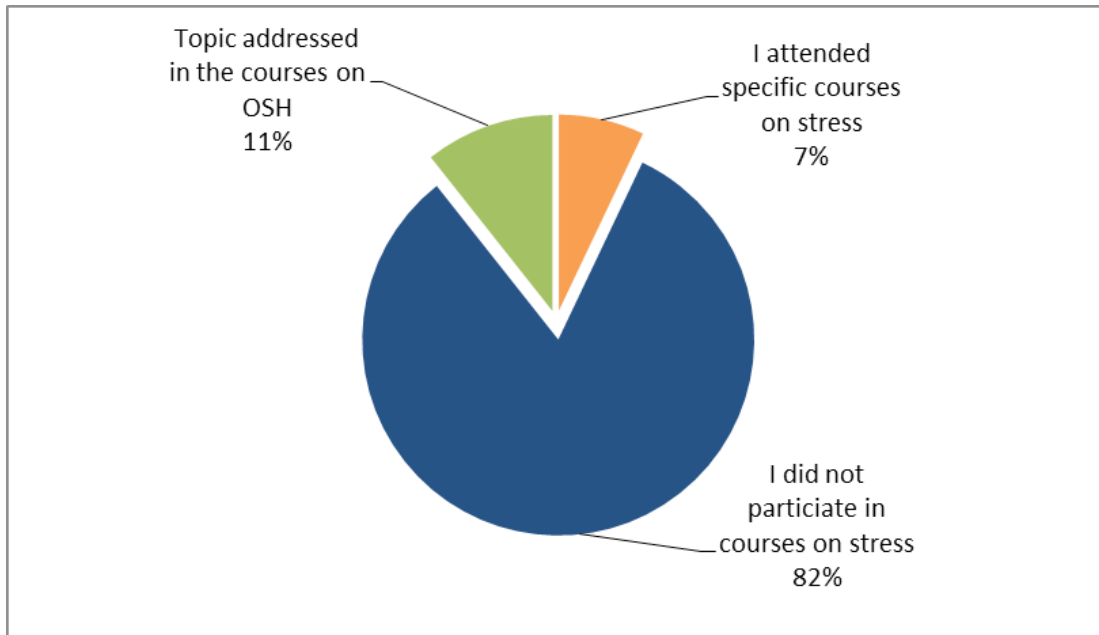
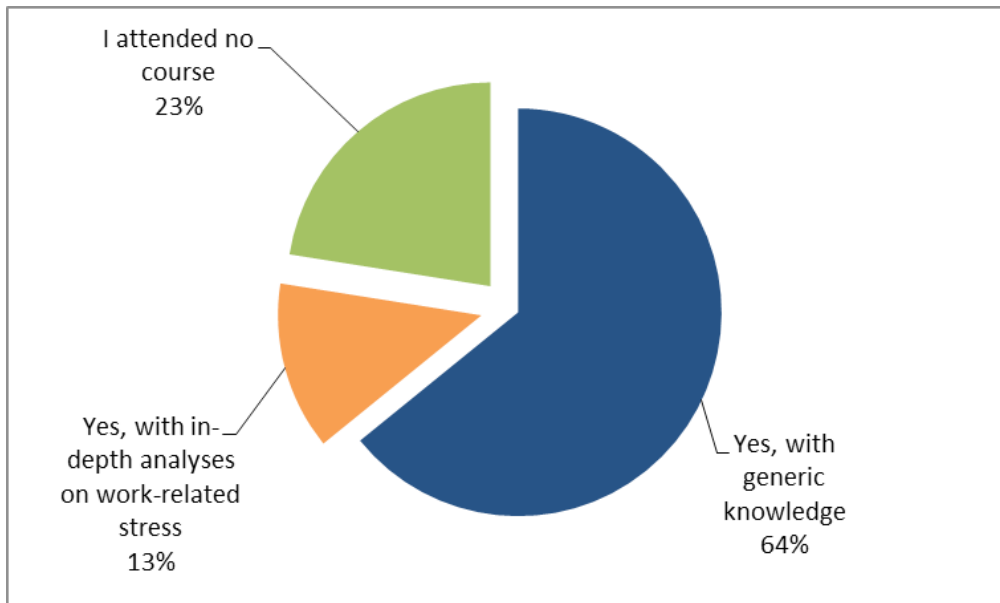


Chart 18 – Health and safety representatives' training on work-related stress (%)



According to HSRs, the subjects involved in specific training were workers in 20% of cases; the Health & Safety Manager and the Supervisor in 10% of cases; Managers in 10.6% of cases and HSRs themselves in 49.2% of cases. According to employers, 43.2% of workers carried out specific training, compared to 11% of Health & Safety Managers, 14.8% of HSRs, 20% of Supervisors and 11% of managers (Chart 19).

Chart 19 – Specific training on work-related stress by different company subjects (%)

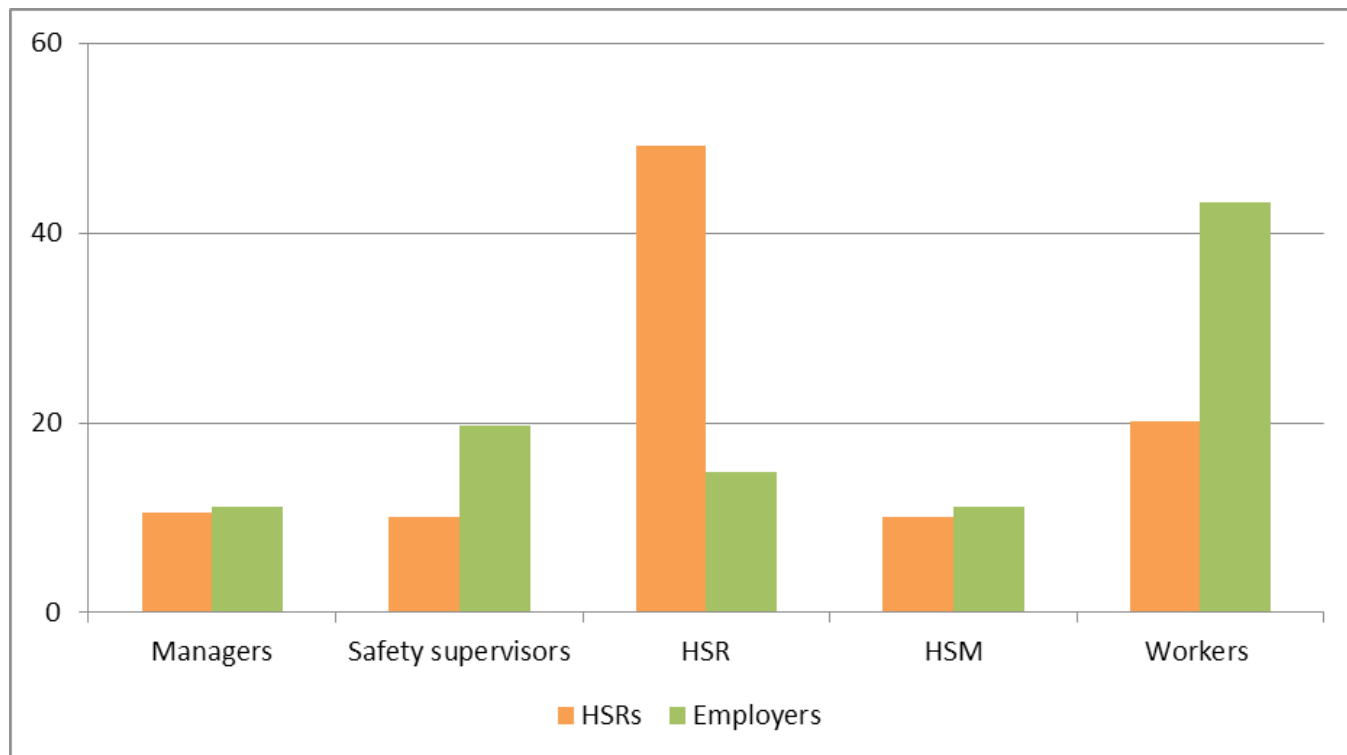


Chart 20 – Subjects providing specific training on the risk of work-related stress (%)

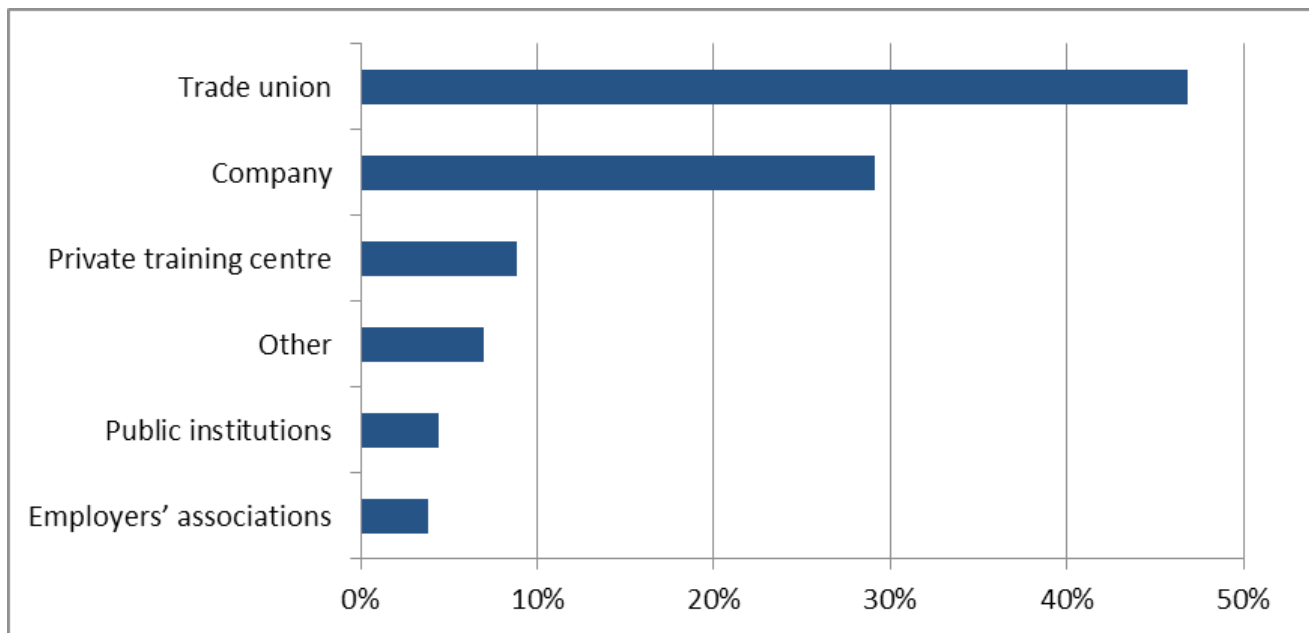
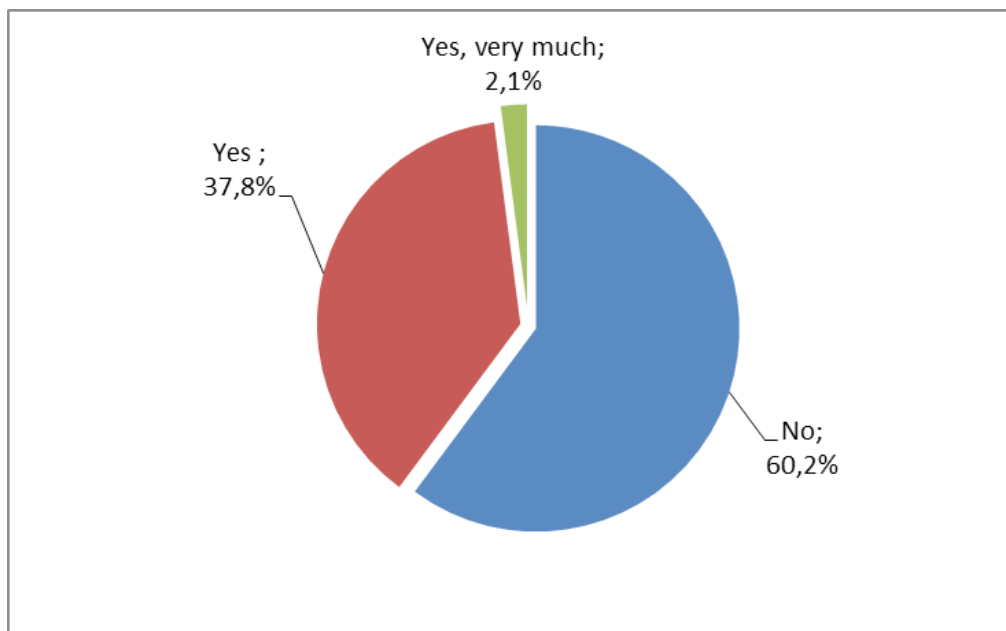


Chart 21 – Preparation on the topic of work-related stress risk (%)



The characteristics of the work-related stress risk at the workplace

In this area the perceptions of workers, HRSr and employers regarding the most problematic characteristics of the work-related stress risk at the workplace are investigated. More specifically the average scores obtained by the whole sample are listed, broken down by type of subject and nationality, with respect to a series of statements regarding the characteristics of the work-related stress risk expressed on a 5-step Likert-type scale (1 = very high risk to 5 = low risk). A comparison of the average scores expressed by the three subjects (workers, HSRs and employers) both considering their countries of origin and the size of the company in which they operate (micro, small and medium-sized companies) shows statistically significant differences (ANOVA $p < 0.001$).

By analysing workers' answers we see that, as to the workload, the lowest score (hence indicating the existence of many problems) was recorded by Greece ($m = 1.62$) followed by France ($m = 1.95$) and Romania ($m = 2.09$), while the highest score (hence indicating the existence of few problems) was recorded by Lithuania ($m = 2.85$) and Hungary ($m = 2.79$). As to career development the average scores were slightly higher, but the most problematic score was recorded by France ($m = 2.26$), Greece ($m = 2.40$) and Italy ($m = 2.56$), while the highest scores were recorded by Lithuania ($m = 2.72$) and Hungary. As to work environment and equipment, the most problematic scores were recorded by Greece ($m = 2.02$), Romania ($m = 2.73$) and Italy ($m = 2.87$), while the least problematic scores were recorded by Hungary ($m = 3.19$) and Portugal ($m = 3.14$). An additional aspect was the planning of tasks: the most problematic scores were those of Greece ($m = 1.83$) and Romania, while those above average were recorded by Hungary ($m = 3.02$) and Portugal ($m = 3.01$). As to working time Greece ($m = 1.87$) and Romania ($m = 2.58$) obtained the lowest scores, while Hungary got the highest score ($m = 3.36$). As to interpersonal relations, in addition to Greece ($m = 1.92$) also France ($m = 2.68$) and Romania ($m = 2.70$) obtained scores below average, while Lithuania was above average ($m = 3.28$). With specific reference to the organizational culture, scores below average were recorded by Greece ($m = 1.95$) and Romania ($m = 2.13$), while Portugal ($m = 3.11$) and Lithuania ($m = 3.21$) were positioned above the average of the sample. As to decision-making autonomy, Greece ($m = 2.03$) and Italy ($m = 2.68$) were below average, while Lithuania ($m = 3.37$) and Hungary ($m = 3.15$) were above average. The position within the organization proved to be problematic for Greece, Romania, Italy and France, but it was less problematic for Lithuania and Portugal. Finally, as to work / life conciliation, Greece, Romania, Italy and France pointed out it was a problematic issue with scores below average, while Hungary, Portugal and Lithuania perceived it in a less problematic way (Chart 22).

When considering the HSRs' answers, we note that, as to the workload ($m = 2.01$), Greece ($m = 1.38$), Romania ($m = 1.70$), France ($m = 1.83$) and Italy ($m = 1.99$) recorded scores below average, thus showing that it was a risk perceived as particularly problematic, whereas Lithuania ($m = 2.41$), Spain, Hungary and Portugal (all with an average equal to 2.25) were above average and hence were in a less problematic condition. The aspect of career development was seen as problematic by Greece ($m = 2.15$), Romania ($m = 2.33$) and France ($m = 2.82$), while the most positive score was recorded by Lithuania ($m = 3.59$). Again Greece ($m = 1.85$) and Romania ($m = 2.30$), together with Italy, obtained negative scores as to the work environmental and equipment, as against France ($m = 3.11$) and Portugal ($m = 3.13$) which recorded the best scores. With specific reference to the planning of tasks, France ($m = 2.51$) along with Greece ($m = 2.62$) and Romania ($m = 2.20$) were the countries where more problems were recorded, while this did not hold true for Portugal, Hungary and Italy. The working time was problematic for Romania and Greece, as well as for France and Portugal, while positive scores were recorded by Hungary and Lithuania. Interpersonal relations were experienced negatively in most countries: in fact, only Spain and Portugal achieved scores above average. A similar situation occurred for the organizational culture: Spain, Portugal and Lithuania were the only countries having scores above average. As to decision-making, Italy, France, Greece and Romania reported the lowest scores and those same countries, together with Spain, recorded the lowest scores also

in relation to the position within the organization. Finally, as to work / life balance, Italy, France, Greece and Romania were the countries experiencing more problems than others (Chart 23).

When analysing the employers' answers, we see that, as to the workload, Romania (average = 2.13), Greece (m = 1.61), Spain (m = 2.24) and Hungary (m = 2.00) were the most problematic countries. As to career development, low scores were recorded by Spain (m = 3.24), as well as Romania and Greece, while Portugal (m = 4.00) and Lithuania recorded scores above average. Italy, Romania and Greece were the countries recording more problems in terms of work environment and equipment. Spain and France, along with Romania and Greece, recorded more problems in the planning of tasks. This aspect is also associated with the working time where negative scores were recorded by Italy, Spain, Romania and Greece. As to interpersonal relations, the lowest scores were recorded by Italy, France, Romania and Greece. Romania and Greece, together with Spain, showed problems also in relation to the organizational culture. As to the position-related aspects, the most problematic countries were Italy, Spain, France, Romania and Greece. Finally the problems associated with work / life balance are greater for Spain, Romania and Greece (Chart 24).

Another aspect investigated was related to the company size and whether it played a role in the perception of the different characteristics of the work-related stress risk at the workplace. As is the case with the analysis of the different countries, the average scores obtained by the whole sample are listed, broken down by type of subject and company size.

When analysing workers' answers, we note that, as to the workload, the most problematic scores were recorded by the employees in small companies (m = 1.88) (below 9 employees) and by those in medium-sized companies (50-250 employees). Both for the HSRs and for the employers the scores, although not high, were very similar to each other even for different company sizes.

As to career development, low scores were recorded by employees in small companies (m = 2.81) (10-49 employees), followed by those in micro and medium-sized companies. It is to be noted that also the employers of medium-sized companies reported a negative score (m = 2.87).

As to the work environment and equipment, the lowest score was recorded by workers in micro companies (m = 2.33), but there was also convergence between the HSRs (m = 2.82) and the employers (m = 2.85) in highlighting this as a critical issue in medium-sized companies.

As regards the planning of tasks, there was substantial convergence between the three types of corporate subjects analysed (workers, HSRs and employers): in micro companies it was a slightly problematic aspect (the score, in fact, was slightly higher than average). However, it is interesting to note that the most problematic score was recorded by the employer (m = 2.49) in medium-sized companies followed by the workers of those companies (m = 2.60).

The same held true for the working time and interpersonal relations, in which the most problematic scores were attributable to the employers (m = 2.78) and workers (m = 2.80) in medium-sized companies and to workers only in micro companies.

A very similar situation was recorded in relation to the organizational culture in which the most problematic scores were recorded by employers (m = 2.52) and workers (m = 2.54) in medium-size companies.

Furthermore, the decision-making autonomy was problematic for all workers, regardless of company size, and also the position within the company seemed to have the same characteristics.

Last but not least, work / life balance in which low scores were recorded by workers, regardless of the company size: the lowest scores were those of micro-enterprises (m = 2.45), followed by medium-sized companies (m = 2.66) and small ones (m = 2.92) (Chart 25).

Chart 22 – Major problems of the work environment according to workers (%)

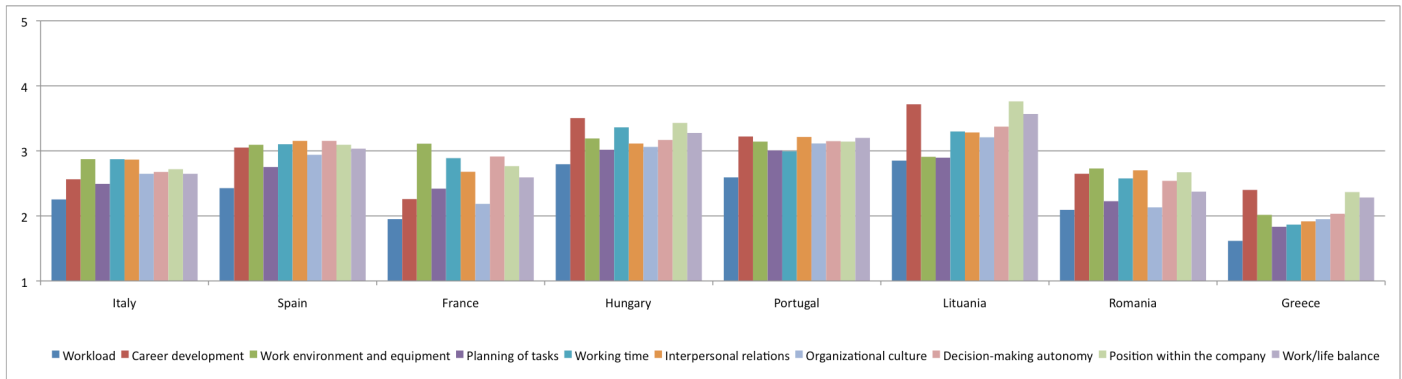


Chart 23 – Major problems of the work environment according to HSRs (%)

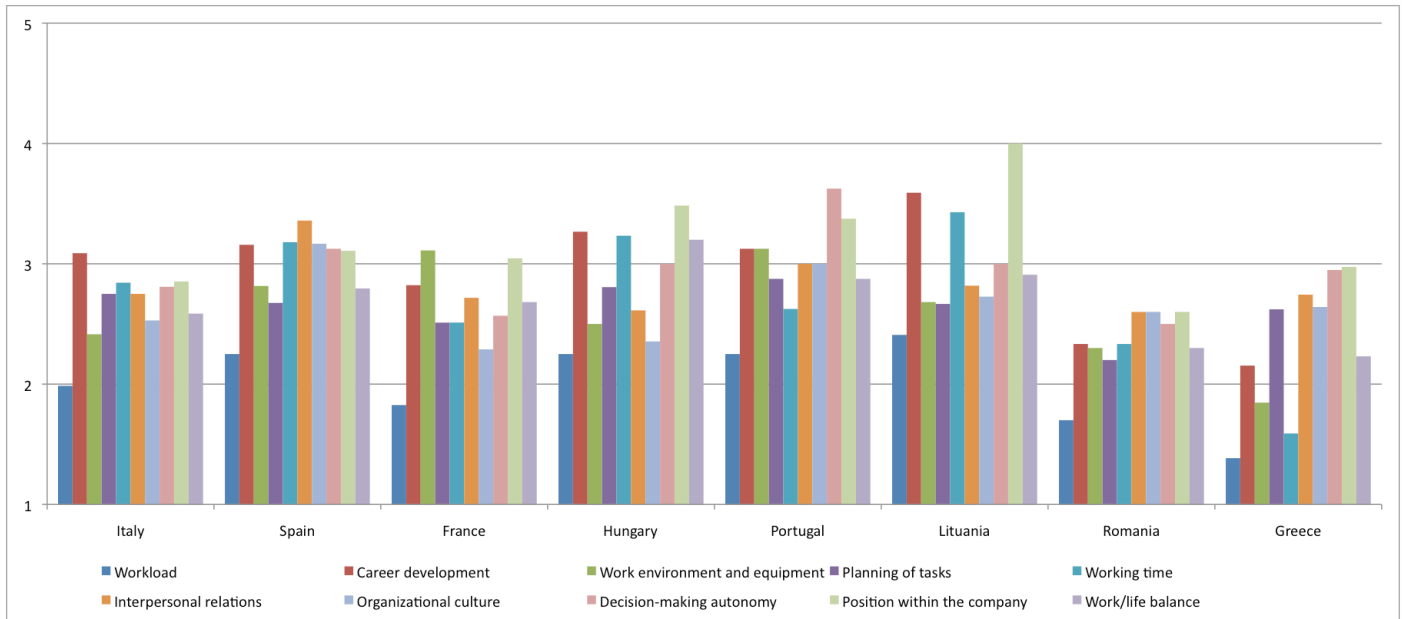


Chart 24 – Major problems of the work environment according to employers (%)

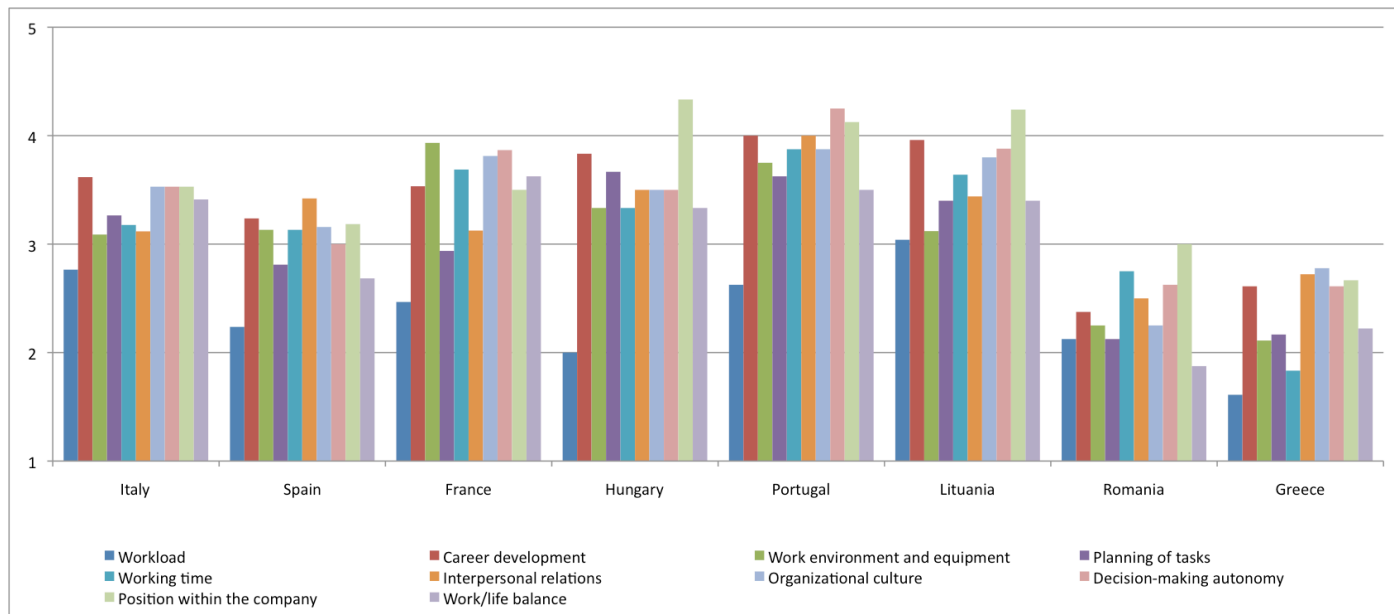
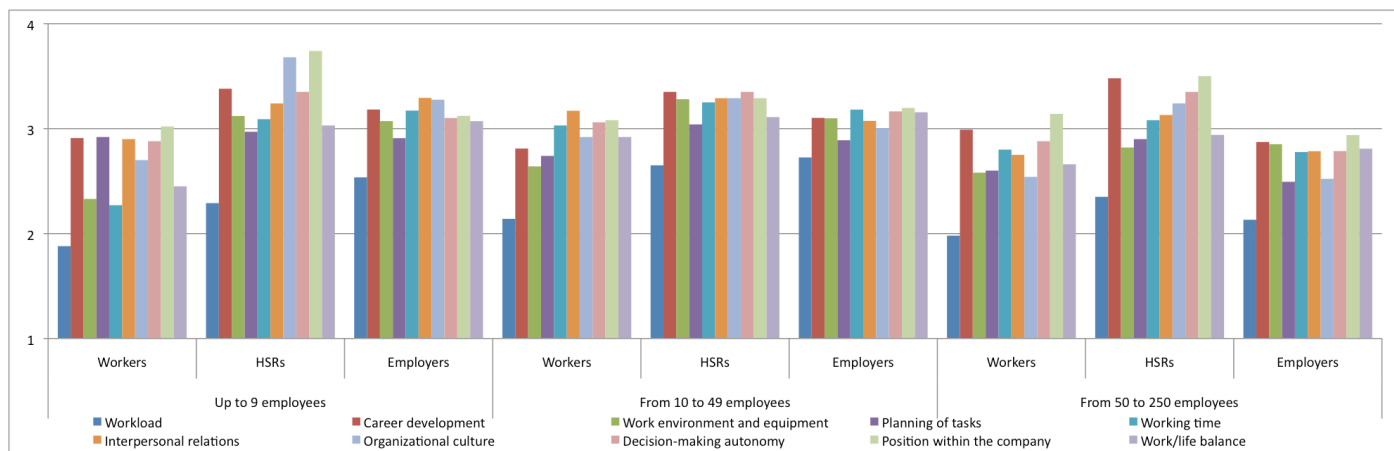


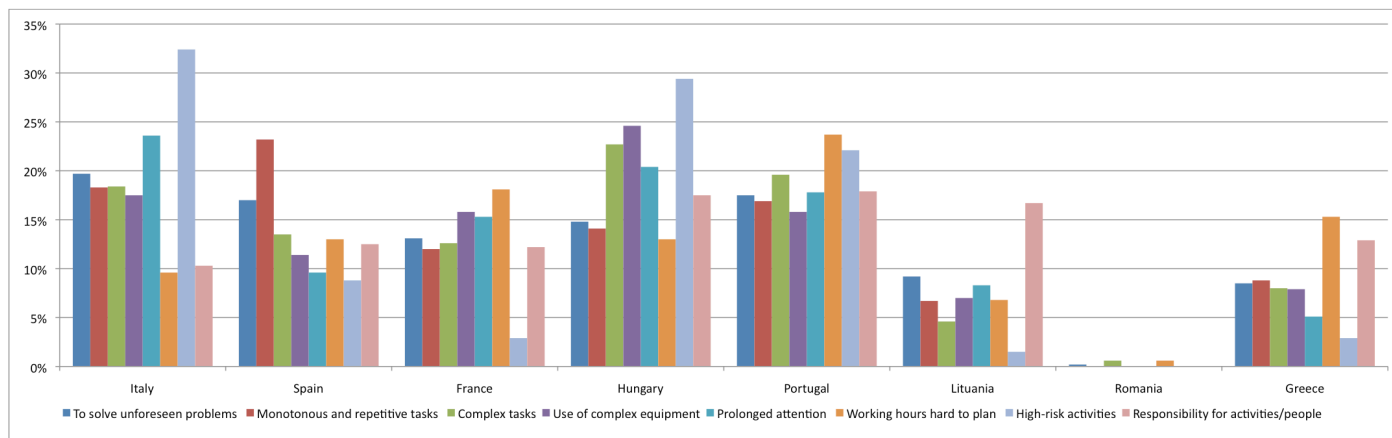
Chart 25 – Major problems of the work environment according to workers, HSRs and employers broken down by company size (%)



Conditions and wellbeing levels at work

In this specific area only workers' perceptions were investigated. The first question regarded the extent to which workers were generally exposed to certain risk factors while performing their work. The other two aspects (for which the average scores obtained by the whole sample are shown, broken down by type of subject and nationality) refer to the degree of satisfaction with the workplace, expressed on a 5-step Likert-type scale (1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied), and the level of occupational wellbeing / discomfort expressed again on a 5-step a Likert-type scale (1 = always to 5 = never). Considering the answers provided by workers, broken down by country, to the question regarding the aspects characterizing their work, we note that Italy, Spain and France mentioned the fact of having to solve unforeseen problems at work and having to perform complex tasks. Even for Hungary, Portugal and Lithuania, we see that the main problem seemed to be the need to solve unexpected problems, but they also mentioned the difficulty of performing monotonous and repetitive tasks, as well as performing complex tasks or having high responsibilities for activities and people. Finally, also Greece and Romania highlighted the need to solve unforeseen problems, along with complex tasks, responsibility and working time which could not be planned (Chart 26).

Chart 26 – Aspects of the work environment (%)



Considering the answers provided by workers in relation to their satisfaction with the workplace, we note that all countries, except for Greece and Lithuania, were satisfied with cleanliness and lighting. As to the aspect more related to environmental comfort, temperature was perceived as unsatisfactory by Italy, France, Hungary and Portugal. Those same nations, along with Greece, reported a low degree of satisfaction with the quietness of the workplace. In general terms, as to the spaces available, Italy, Spain, Hungary and Romania were particularly dissatisfied with the aesthetic aspects and furniture. As to hardware and software, the most dissatisfied countries were Italy, Spain, France, Hungary, Portugal, Lithuania, Romania and Greece. Finally, a comparison of the average values expressed by the three types of subjects (workers, HSRs and employers), based on their countries of origin, showed statistically significant differences (ANOVA $p < 0.000$) (Chart 27).

The part relating to physical and mental health aspects asked to indicate whether, in the last six months preceding the survey, the subjects had suffered of specific health problems and how frequently. A comparison of the average scores

expressed by the three types of subjects (workers, HSRs and employers), based on their countries of origin, showed statistically significant differences (ANOVA $p < 0.000$).

When asked whether the subject felt “empty” at the end of the working day, the countries recording low scores (below average) were Italy, France, Romania and Greece. Those same nations recorded a low score also for the aspect relating to the perception of doing unnecessary work. In addition, Italy, France, Hungary and Greece seemed to record the lowest scores also in relation to the question whether the subjects felt a heavy head or felt confused at the end of the working day. Feeling tired and anxious at work seemed to be more problematic for workers in France, Portugal and Greece; while feeling isolated at work seemed to be a feeling mostly experienced by Italian, French and Hungarian workers. While those first questions were more focused psychological health aspects, the other group of questions was more focused on the relational and behavioural aspects.

More specifically, as to the question asking workers whether they felt easily irritable at work, we note that 6 out of 8 countries got a below-average score (only Spain and Hungary were above average). Therefore also feeling scarcely ready to communicate with others after a working day is an aspect for which 4 nations got negative scores below average (France, Lithuania, Romania and Greece). As to feeling easily irritable when off from work, France, Hungary and Romania scored below average.

Another aspect investigated was the fact of feeling to be harassed at the workplace: France, Lithuania and Romania scored negatively, as is also the case with the question asking whether feeling insecure while performing duties – and this held true also for Italy.

Finally, with reference to the questions asking whether “feeling motivated to perform work at best” and “feeling concentrated at work”, unlike the other statements shown in the chart (Chart 28) for which the negative answers expressed a negative condition and, conversely, the positive answers expressed a positive condition, the negative answers (always, often) expressed a positive condition and the positive answers (rarely, never) expressed a negative condition.

The data showed us how Spain, France, Lithuania and Romania scored negatively to the question asking whether feeling motivated to perform work at best, while as regards concentration at work the most critical scores were recorded by France, Hungary and Lithuania.

Chart 27 – Aspects of the work environment (%)

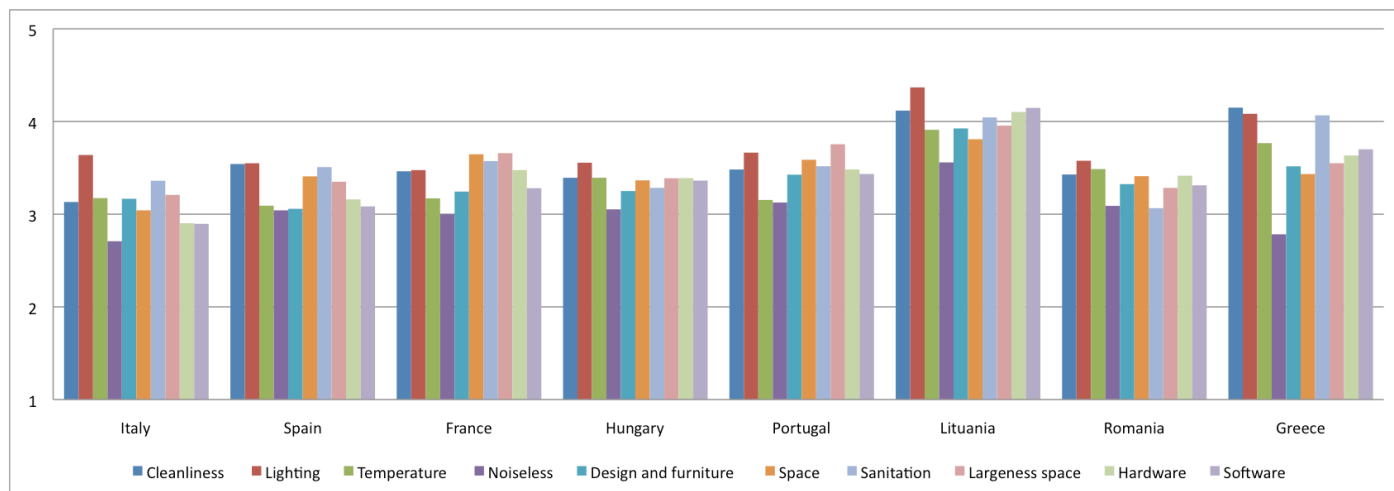
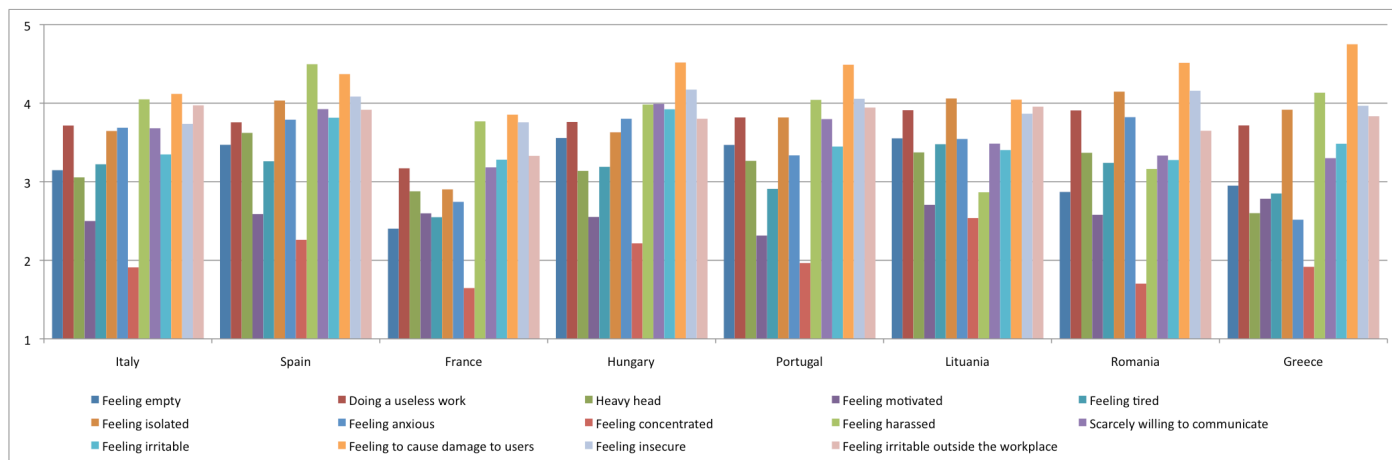


Chart 28 – Level of wellbeing/discomfort at work (%)



5. National Focus Group

This chapter outlines the results of the survey which envisaged a more qualitative assessment phase, where a focus group was carried out for each country involved in the project, with the aim of highlighting the most significant initiatives undertaken in the various countries, thus encouraging the exchange of views with the protagonists of the activities, so as to increase the strategic alliance.

As to the various contributions, several stakeholders and experts were identified, including those who had already defined good practices in the field.

Among the various stakeholders who participated in the focus groups, the following subjects were identified: trade unions, employers' associations, supervisory bodies and professionals dealing with risk assessment at the workplace. This pattern was followed in all the countries participating in the project.

More specifically, the main goal was to evaluate - from a qualitative viewpoint - the state of the art of prevention policies and the way in which work-related stress is tackled in SMEs.

The topics examined can be grouped into five main aspects, which made it possible to highlight the different characteristics of risk and the tools to analyse it, together with the major problems incurred and the initiatives undertaken, focusing on a recent aspect, namely technology and the role it plays in work-related stress:

1. The characteristics of psychosocial risk in SMEs: are all possible factors of work-related stress (subject of the work performance, work organization, work environment, communication difficulties, poor work-life balance) covered by national legislation? Do these risks reflect the characteristics of psychosocial risk in SMEs?

2. Resources and tools to face psychosocial risk in SMEs: what measures do SMEs take to prevent / counteract the psychosocial risk? Are they in line with regulatory requirements?

Is compliance with law provisions sufficient to ensure concrete actions designed to combat work-related stress?

3. The problems incurred in implementing measures to combat work-related stress in SMEs: what are the main obstacles to the effective implementation of preventive actions and measures to combat work-related stress? (eg.: ineffective regulations, poor enforcement of health and safety standards at work, low affiliation rates in unions / employers' associations, cultural resistance, low investment in health and safety at work, lack of awareness of the problem, etc.)

4. Participants' initiatives targeted to SMEs: how your organizations deal with the problem? (eg.: with training, awareness campaigns, promotion of tools for assessing work-related stress, ad hoc provisions in collective agreements, etc.)

5. Work-related stress and new technologies: what are the specific risk factors arising from industry 4.0 and smart working? (eg. automation and monotonous and repetitive work, high performance control, work on tablets and smartphones, contacts outside the working time)? Are there specific legal provisions or evaluation tools regarding these risks? What strategies can be adopted?

The information emerged were summarized and used as source for drafting this report. A file including the main conclusions was drafted for each country. A summary of the following Focus Groups can be found below.

1. The characteristics of psychosocial risk in SMEs

France

Issue relating to the scope: stress or, more generally, psychosocial risks?
Specificity of micro-enterprises: the issue does not lie in simplifying the message, but in better specifying it so as to take special features into account. Difficulty in distinguishing the work sphere from the private sphere.
Employers and employees think the main stressors at work are the following: work organization, work pace and workload, planning of tasks, interpersonal relations, but also work / life balance and working time.
Acts of violence and acts of incivility occur in some trades and professions.
In companies with up to 10 employees, the affective dimension is very important, which means that by living together you can solve difficulties more easily. The strong affective component, however, may encourage harassment.

Greece

There are many psychological and social risks recognized (increase because of the crisis and the Memorandum. But they are not officially documented. Although there is a legal framework, it is not respected. There are no monitoring / supervision actions.

Italy

The Italian law specifies all possible work-related risk factors, including stress and violence at the workplace. With a view to promoting the effective enforcement of obligations, national authorities and regions issued guidelines to define a common methodology for risk assessment. However, the assessment of work-related stress risk seems to be carried out by companies in a still bureaucratic and ineffective way.

Lithuania

The main psychosocial risk factors at the workplace are related to: job content, personal characteristics, cooperation with management and colleagues, harassment and psychological violence by employers, fear of being fired, safe work environment and scarce opportunities for career development.

Portugal

Participants do not agree that regulations tackle work-related stress adequately.

Spain Generally in SMEs little attention is paid to the role of prevention Services, authorities and inspection units. Psychosocial risks are generally underestimated. They are often attributed to interpersonal conflicts and not to work organization problems. Also the role played by the prevention Services in this field is evaluated negatively because, being funded by the company, they are not independent and tend not to admit the existence of risks so as to avoid taking steps which could increase spending.

Hungary The national legal framework is quite good; the activities entailing psychosocial risks and the possible factors involving psychosocial risks at work are listed and properly covered (Appendix 5. and 6. Decree 33/1998 of the Welfare Ministry).

Romania Although the agreement was implemented and the risk factors included therein correspond to the reality of SMEs, it is no longer in force because of the repeal of the national collective bargaining level.

2. Resources and tools to face psychosocial risk in SMEs

France Dialogue and communication as a first response.
The mandatory Single Document, drafted in the framework of social dialogue within the company, formalized the assessment of risks at the workplace, including the stress assessment.
Training of managers.
Ineffectiveness of the specific tariffs for accidents at work and occupational diseases which are not an incentive to prevention for micro-enterprises, as is the case for large companies.
To improve and extend service and economic assistance (the so-called simplified economic aid - AFS - provided by the funds for pension and health at work insurance (CARSAT, Caisses d'assurance retraite et de la santé au travail)

Greece No resources or tools for SMEs.

Italy The Guidelines for assessing work-related stress promoted by national authorities entail a preliminary assessment based on business indicators and the consultation of workers and / or their representatives. If there is a risk, a further assessment shall be conducted on the basis of a checklist and shall involve workers and / or their representatives by means of questionnaires or focus groups.
It is to be noted, however, that the indicators adopted are not always relevant and suitable for micro-enterprises with a minimum number of workers. Also the tools designed to make an in-depth analysis of risks, through questionnaires or focus groups, could not provide objective results in companies with a small number of workers because, in such small companies, the relations with the employer are direct.

Lithuania There are many tools designed to address psychosocial problems: individual and group supervision at the workplace; contacting the Labor Inspectorate; the support of a psychologist at the workplace; providing recreational or relaxation activities; improving the work environment; paying an additional salary for the increased risks at the workplace.

Portugal	Although there are tools to tackle the psychosocial risk, employers are often not aware of their existence. In addition, the existing tools are not suited to user needs. Participants suggest that large companies and the public sector should serve as an example, by testing the use of tools to monitor and reduce stress.
Spain	The management's degree of participation, tools and possible solutions are limited.
Hungary	The employers' obligations provided for in the Labour Act and the instructions of the OHP are clear, but not all employers comply with suggestions and take the necessary measures to reduce the risk factors and cooperate with S&H experts.
Romania	There are few tools to address the issue in SMEs. Therefore activities should be developed to increase companies' awareness and assist them in defining measures to combat stress.

3. The problems incurred in implementing measures to combat work-related stress in SMEs

France	<p>In the specific case of micro-enterprises: access to training and information is more difficult because of time reasons, as well as costs.</p> <p>The issues related to stress and psychosocial risks are not considered a priority, especially when the company survival is threatened.</p> <p>In certain sectors it is hard to implement stress-targeted actions because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between health, safety, working conditions and "safety" of goods or values.</p> <p>Furthermore, while designing prevention measures in SMEs, it should be noted that, in case of accident, in a small structure the emotional impact is very strong, thus putting again into question what has been achieved in the field of prevention and any further prevention action particularly designed for psychosocial risks. A severe accident in a micro-enterprise is very rare, but it is very difficult to accept.</p>
Greece	<p>The current economic context and labour relations lead to a worsening of stress conditions.</p> <p>The legal framework is weak. In general terms no priority is attached to health and safety by the Troika, the State, employers and even employees.</p>
Italy	<p>There is still scarce recognition of the work-related stress problem.</p> <p>On the other hand, some companies actually implement good practices although, in reality, actions aimed at supporting life/work balance prevail.</p> <p>This is the reason why, the relevant national and regional authorities, as well as the other competent bodies, including Joint Bodies, need to adopt an approach based on assistance to employers. They should promote awareness of the work-related stress risks and assist employers in identifying risk factors and planning the measures needed to tackle it.</p>

Lithuania The most dangerous source for this problem is employers' attitude. They can 'overestimate' themselves and underestimate the role of their employees. In small companies it is the employer who creates the work environment and his/her attitude can instil fear in discussing work-related stress. On the other hand, employees may be too reluctant to approach the subject as they may think there is no room for change.

Portugal The main obstacles are the lack of awareness and knowledge, while resources are scarce. Furthermore, workers often do not perceive stressors as a risk, thus hampering further recognition of the company problem. Finally, there is a lack of risk prevention culture and schools could do more in this regard.

Spain The possibilities of changing working conditions, tasks and working time are usually rather limited. There is strong employers' resistance in adopting measures vis-à-vis an individual worker and, at times, there is also resistance by the rest of the workers who regard measures taken towards an individual as an unjustified privilege.

Hungary SME employees are not well organized or not organized at all. Employers aim at short-term profit rather than seeking long-term benefits. There is no mandatory collective agreement for companies up to 250 employees, but only safety provisions.

Romania There are major obstacles directly linked to the company reality. SMEs often have difficulty in organizing and properly sharing the work, partly due to a weak management culture. On top of it, little attention is paid by employers to the above topic.

4. Participants' initiatives targeted to SMEs

France Self-evaluation tool for enterprises made available by the CPME (Confederation of SMEs) Ile-de-France. Training Fund financed by the public healthcare service.
Online tool of INRS (National Institute for Research and Safety) allowing to assist companies in drafting the Single Document on risks including psychosocial risks with employees' involvement. With regard to the INRS ED 4700 catalogue, downloadable from the Internet, it brings together the various tools for preventing psychosocial risks for managers or employees. In particular, the brochure entitled "En parler pour en sortir" (Talk about it to get rid of it) allows to raise awareness and communicate by drawing inspiration from the ideas developed on psychosocial risks.
The tool "Faire le point" (To take stock), under the form of an Excel grid, enables companies up to 50 employees to assess the existence or absence of psychosocial risks by answering forty questions.

Greece Initiatives are mostly confined to training.

Italy There are few initiatives specifically addressed to work-related stress. Nevertheless, the participants have stressed that social partners have the potential to put in place support and awareness-raising activities for companies on work-related stress.

Lithuania The main factors leading to take initiatives are employees' recognition of the problem and knowledge of the law provisions protecting them. Unions can use different strategies and tools to protect workers, but the assumption is that workers organize themselves and adhere to a union.

Portugal The trade unions and employers' associations involved translated and disseminated the agreement to their members as part of the awareness-raising activities.

Spain There are various training initiatives and proposals for prevention tools, but many SME workers are not aware of them. On the best possible assumption, greater awareness of the problem is required for managers.

Hungary The training on safety and health issues would be vital at all education levels. It is an important issue for the health and safety representatives – they should be aware of the importance of working conditions (not only in SMEs), with specific reference to psychosocial risks.

Romania Several activities were suggested including studies on the subject, carried out by research centres, and also the Labour Inspectorate showed interest in this particular issue. Nevertheless, stress is not yet taken into due account at the workplace.

5. Work-related stress and new technologies

France Right to disconnect and telework

Greece New technologies increase the existing stressors.

Italy Smart-work and Industry 4.0 have a greater impact on large companies than on SMEs. However, the overall reduction in labour demand is a significant risk of job losses. Obviously, this involves the fear of losing job, particularly among older workers. The changes underway also promote the so-called 'just in time' work, which could result in increased stress due to job instability and the worsening of the work organization quality. As to smart work, the boundary between private life and work could become blurred due to the possibility of working from home, and especially due to the fact of having to be always available. Finally, participants stressed that working in global supply chains may entail stress due to night work, depending on the actual time zone of colleagues / clients.

Lituania New technologies lead to increased fear of losing job and not being able to find a new one. Another consequence causing stress is the worry of not being able to cope with new tasks.

Portugal

As to risks, there is still no sound knowledge about the impact of new technologies on workers' and people's health.

The use of these technologies, namely e-mail and mobile phones, is a current concern requiring the definition of strategies allowing to balance work and life.

There is the need to create a "safety culture" and increase awareness of health risks.

Spain

The Spanish legislation has no specific provisions in this regard. Real legislation is required. In line with SMEs, the level of risk to which workers are exposed must be assessed in order to plan and implement a series of preventive measures to adopt the right to disconnect, thus regulating the connection time and the use of e-mail. It is generally accepted that new technologies are a severe problem and may contribute to psychosocial risks, but there are currently no tools to address the problem from the labour viewpoint.

Hungary

The Hungarian model of good practices on health and safety at work could be implemented in Hungary. The number of similar good practices should be increased.

Romania

With regard to new technologies, participants pointed to the risk of workers' isolation, although there is not yet widespread awareness of new risks related to phenomena such as remote work.

6. Conclusions and policy orientations

European companies (58%) view the aspects of work involving exposure to psychosocial risks, and stress in particular, as the most prevalent risk factors at the workplace. Furthermore "the radical changes which are taking place in the labour world lead to emerging psychosocial risks. These risks relating to the way in which work is designed, organized and managed, as well as to the labour economic and social context, result in an increase in stress levels and can cause a severe deterioration of mental and physical health". At the same time "the psychosocial risk factors" are perceived to be more difficult to manage than others. Almost one company out of five reporting having to deal with difficult customers or being subject to time pressure stated it had not the appropriate information or tools to address the risk effectively" (EU-OSHA, 2015). These problems mainly regard micro and small companies: in fact, approximately 33% of the companies with more than 20 employees in the EU-28 reported they had an action plan to prevent work-related stress and the percentage rises as the company size increases. These problems, however, are certainly experienced also by medium-sized and large enterprises as "slightly more than 50% of the companies surveyed in the EU-28 (53%) reported having enough information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessment"(EU-OSHA, 2015).

These are some current central aspects of the stress phenomenon and the issues associated with its management at European level, which have been reaffirmed by the survey conducted as part of the Project REST@Work. The survey has deepened and outlined the picture of the problems incurred in managing the risk of work-related stress in most of the eight countries that contributed to the preliminary desk and field surveys carried out through questionnaires and focus groups.

Legal obligations and applicability of the European Agreement

More than ten years after the enactment of the Framework Agreement (2004), the preliminary survey conducted within the project, and designed to investigate the framework of law and transpositions provisions, confirms the existence of “significant differences” in the Member States’ legislation and practices: 3 out of 8 countries have not yet transposed the European Agreement while, in one of these countries, it applies only to the sectors for which the reference organizations have signed the Agreement. Six out of 8 countries make a more or less explicit reference to stress in their legal framework of protection against work-related risks.

This state of affairs makes us wonder whether:

time has now come to turn the Framework Agreement into a legislative provision and hence into a daughter directive of the Framework Directive 89/391

This provision would make workers’ protection against this specific risk uniform throughout the European Community. Nevertheless we are aware that this action - albeit greatly helping to increase Member States’ awareness of this emerging and rampant risk - is not the solution to all the problems of stress risk management.

Emerging topics

Some interesting topics relating to national policies and to the main difficulties arising in managing stress have already emerged in the preliminary desk survey, made available by the monitoring activities carried out in some partner countries by institutions, unions or research institutes. By way of example, we can mention the following:

-
- *stress is increasingly taken into account in risk assessment; nevertheless, following the assessment, the conclusion drawn is mostly the absence of such risk;*
 - *prevention measures are implemented rarely;*
 - *the involvement of workers and their representatives in micro and small enterprises, in particular, is scarce;*
 - *a specific problem was highlighted, namely scarce attention paid by most of the countries involved (with few exceptions) to the need for supporting SMEs in assessing and managing stress.*
-

However, it is the field survey - carried out through questionnaires and focus groups - which provides us with a much more accurate and detailed picture of the situation in the 8 countries where the survey was carried out. Problems emerge in the concrete management at company level:

-
- *for workers (42%) the stress risk assessment is an unknown activity or an activity that they know was not carried out (40%), as also confirmed by HSRs and employers;*
 - *nearly 50% of workers is not aware of the prevention measures adopted;*
 - *as to workers’ involvement, 46.9% do not know what we are talking about;*
 - *HSRs stated they were involved in 6.6% of cases;*
 - *only 15% of HSRs were involved throughout the assessment process;*
 - *in 51.6% of cases the awareness-raising initiatives involved the distribution of booklets and brochures;*
 - *according to what stated by workers, in 82% of cases specific training on stress was not carried out.*
-

Furthermore, very significant messages emerged during the focus groups carried out in all partner countries. The free exchange of opinions and viewpoints enabled the participants to describe the specificities of micro and small enterprises and analyse the issues by giving guidelines so as to provide a real contribution for preventing the stress risk in micro and small enterprises, in particular.

- “Considering the specificity of micro and small enterprise does not necessarily mean simplifying the message, but it must be specified by taking the specificities into account”.
- “In companies with up to 10 employees, the affective dimension is very important, which means that by living together you can solve difficulties more easily; nevertheless, the strong affective component may encourage harassment.”
- “The dialogue, often informal in SMEs, is a first response.”
- “Severe events are so destabilizing in a micro or small company that can undermine any further prevention action, particularly for psychosocial risks.”
- “In small companies it is the employer who creates the work environment, and his/her attitude may instil fear of discussing work-related stress. On the other hand, workers may be too reluctant to approach the subject as they may think there is no room for change”.

- “Therefore it is on the employer that we must rely primarily to increase knowledge and awareness”.

- “Psychosocial risks are often underestimated or misinterpreted, thus attaching greater importance to interpersonal conflicts rather than to the problems related to work organization”.
- “Employers are often not aware of the extent of psychosocial risks and unacquainted with the existing instruments to address them”.
- “Difficulties in access to information and training for micro and small businesses”.

- “Awareness and recognition of the problem is still too scarce within companies. This is the reason why, the relevant national and regional authorities, as well as the other competent bodies, including the structures created by social partners (e.g. in Italy, the Joint Bodies), need to adopt an approach based on assistance to employers. They should promote awareness of the work-related stress risks and assist employers in identifying risk factors and planning the measures needed to tackle it”.
- “To improve and extend service and economic assistance to micro and small businesses”.
- “Funds for business”.
- “Availability of online self-assessment tools”.

We strongly emphasize the key role played by employers in better introducing prevention in micro and small companies. For employers, however, this is only one of their multiple roles and it is often not considered a priority. This is a difficulty when it comes to make them adopt measures for staff health and safety in the broadest way.

The support to employers and companies of this size - widely urged in the debate developed within the focus groups between social partners' representatives and experts - must meet certain criteria ensuring its effectiveness.

- *An effective approach to SMEs implies a real consideration of their specific features when a prevention message is conveyed.*
- *An effective message implies the creation of a strong interpersonal relationship, within which the necessary exchanges will be made to create a climate of trust*
- *namely: "Carrying out prevention with" - This is the principle for sharing views on the issues of prevention at territorial level - between employers and their associations, workers / their representatives and trade unions - which can promote the growth of an empowered and responsible community in which the individual entrepreneurs can find again a condition motivating them to "change attitude" - a kind of "public engagement" going well beyond obligations, law provisions and the fear of penalties.*
- *As to the arguments, we must insist on positive aspects, such as the possibility of reducing sick leaves and absences, as well as improving the company image and workers' wellbeing. The negative arguments must be managed with care, particularly those insisting on the costs of accidents at work (a SME may certainly be affected, but, on average, it records an accident every fourteen years - hence you cannot reason on the basis of experience).*
- *We must offer support services following the company over time, as well as customized services, taking into account the specificities of the company and its owner namely: companies' direct involvement in a phase of information and assistance is the factor allowing to implement a gradual approach, by "staggering actions and measures over time". This is another suggestion provided by the aforementioned INRS study. The meetings to delve into the issues or the training initiatives, in which the companies are preliminarily involved, are situations like "inclusion in a group of peers" because - as the French researchers maintain - "those who look alike are more inclined to change their viewpoint on an issue ... they will reconsider the way they think and they will analyse their previous spontaneous behaviours." namely: care over time and ongoing coaching to companies are some of the most effective support strategies. With a view to improving the "safety culture" of the company / employer and changing the behaviour of all the subjects constituting this economic and life unit, the actions taken must be "staggered over time, thus organizing adequately to ensure the relationship continuity." We must consider that behavioural changes need reinforcement and sharing: "Given that long-lasting changes must be made in the company, we can hardly expect to achieve results with impromptu measures. The action ... should ideally fit into a strategy and be continuous and consistent over time. The contact should be maintained in one way or another ... The message shall be repeated in other forms, or it shall be repeated with communications and message gradually enriched with "content"⁶.*

⁶Op. cit

Bibliography

Aiello A, Deitingner P, Nardella C, (2012), Il modello di valutazione dei rischi psicosociali "VARP", Franco Angeli, Milan.

Bailey KD, (1995) Metodi della ricerca sociale, Il mulino, Bologna

Blaziene. I. and Zabarauskaitė, R. (2015), Lithuania: Working life country profile, Eurofound, available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/lithuania/lithuania-working-life-country-profile>.

Correia, T., Rui Gomes, A., Moreira, S. (2010), Stresse Ocupacional em Professores do Ensino Básico: Um Estudo Sobre as Diferenças Pessoais e Profissionais, Proceedings of the 7th National Symposium of Research in Psychology, University of Minho, Portugal, 4-6 February 2010, available at: <http://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/bitstream/1822/10502/1/4-Actas-SO-Professores-Simp%25C3%25B3sio%2520Psicologia.pdf>.

De Carlo NA, Robusto E (1996) Teoria e Tecniche di campionamento nell e scienze sociali, LED, Milano

Di Nunzio, D., Barnaba, L. Cuomo, E. and Ferrucci, G. (2015), La valutazione e gestione del rischio stress lavoro-correlato nel comparto industriale: i risultati di ricerca, in: Di Nunzio D. (ed.), Lo stress lavoro correlato nel settore metalmeccanico. L'opinione dei rappresentanti sindacali, Ediesse, Rome, pp. 45-105.

D'Orsi, F., Ballottin, A. (2016), Iniziative delle Regioni: il monitoraggio delle aziende e le valutazioni degli organi di vigilanza, conference presentation, 79th SiMLii National Congress, 21-23 September, Rome.

Eurofound. Fifth European Working Conditions Survey [Internet]. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union; 2012, available at: URL: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1182en.pdf

Eurofound, EU-OSHA (2014), Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) [Internet]. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union; 2010 available at :URL: https://osha.europa.eu/en/node/6745/file_view

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.(2015). Seconda indagine europea tra le imprese sui rischi nuovi ed emergenti (ESENER-2). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/it/tools-and-publications/publications/reports/esener-ii-summary.pdf/view>

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. European Risk Observatory Calculating the cost of work-related stress and psychosocial risks, (2014). available at: https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/literature_reviews/calculating-the-cost-of-work-related-stress-and-psychosocial-risks/view

European Commission (2011), Report on the implementation of the European social partners' Framework Agreement on Work-related Stress, Commission Staff Working Paper, Brussels.

Faioli, M. (2016), Italy: Working life country profile, Eurofound, available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/italy/italy-working-life-country-profile>.

Fernández Avilés, J.A. (ed. by) (2015), La negociación colectiva en Prevención de Riesgos Psicosociales en el Trabajo, Secretaría de Salud

Laboral y Medio Ambiente UGT-CEC, available at :
<http://portal.ugt.org/saludlaboral/observatorio/catalogo2015/publicaciones/revistas/024/index.html>.

Galli, G. (2014), Stress lavoro-correlato: "potenzialità e limiti" nei risultati del monitoraggio Uil sulle modalità applicative dell'obbligo di valutazione, conference presentation, Convegno UIL - La valutazione dello stress lavoro-correlato: potenzialità e limiti di un obbligo legislativo, 23 October, Bologna.

Guarironi, M. et al. (2013), Occupational health concerns: stress-related and psychological problems associated with work, Directorate General for Internal Policies - European Parliament.

INSHT (2015), Buenas prácticas en gestión del estrés y de los riesgos psicosociales en el trabajo, available at: <http://www.insht.es/InshtWeb/Contenidos/Documentacion/Buenas%20practicass%20en%20gestion%20del%20estres.pdf>.

Kiss, A. et al. (2015), Hungary: Working life country profile, Eurofound, available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/hungary/hungary-working-life-country-profile>.

Levi, L. & Levi, I., Guidance on work-related stress – Spice of life or kiss of death? Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2000.

Nardella, C., Deitingner, P., Aiello, A., (2011), La valutazione dello Stress Lavoro correlato nelle Micro e Piccole Imprese: uno studio di validazione dello strumento "CSL" (Checklist sullo Stress Lavoro-Correlato), Giornale Italiano di Medicina del Lavoro ed Ergonomia. Supplemento B, Psicologia, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. B69-B77.

Nardella, C. (2013), Il modello "Valutazione dei rischi psicosociali (VARP): una riflessione su indicatori, strumenti e interventi, in: AA.VV., Verifica della metodologia di valutazione del rischio stress lavoro-correlato. Edizioni Palinsesto, Rome.

Naumann, R. and Carrilho, P. (2015), Portugal: Working life country profile, Eurofound, available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/portugal/portugal-working-life-country-profile>.

OSHA (2002), Work-related stress, Facts, no. 22, available at:
<https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/factsheets/22/view>.

Parent-Thirion A., E. FernándezMacías, J.Hurley, G. Vermeylen Fourth European Working Conditions Survey - Eurofund Dublin 2007
Rui Gomes, A., Fernando Cruz, S., Cabanelas, S. (2009), Estresse Ocupacional em Profissionais de Saúde: Um Estudo com Enfermeiros Portugueses, Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa, Vol. 25 n. 3, pp. 307-318, available at: <https://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/bitstream/1822/9921/1/4-SO-Enfermeiros-Psicologia-Teoria%20e%20Pesquisa.pdf>

Sanz, P. (2015), Spain: Working life country profile, available at:
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/spain/spain-working-life-country-profile>.

Schulze-Marmeling, S., Tissandier, H., Turlan, F. (2015), France: Working life country profile, Eurofound, available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/france/france-working-life-country-profile>.

Stoiciu, V. (2015), Romania: Working life country profile, Eurofound, available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/national-contributions/romania/romania-working-life-country-profile>.

Tarín, G.S., Rodriguez-Caro de la Rosa, M. (2013), La percepción de la Salud y Riesgos Psicosociales en una muestra multisectorial, Secretaría de Salud Laboral y Medio Ambiente UGT-CEC, available at: <http://www.ugt.es/Publicaciones/GuiaIceberg.pdf>.



REST@Work

REducing STress at Work

With financial support from the European Union



UIL - Servizio Politiche del Sociale e Sostenibilità
Via Lucullo, 6 Roma 00187 Italia
www.uil.it