Managing psychosocial risks in European micro and small enterprises:

Qualitative evidence from the Third European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER 2019)

Country Report (Croatia)

European Agency
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1 Introduction

This report presents a qualitative follow-up study to the Third European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER 2019) in Croatia. It encompasses three key sources of information: primary data collection among management and employees in micro and small companies (a total of 21 companies consulted with a total of 41 semi-structured in-depth interviews); ESENER 2019 dataset; and review of relevant policy and legal framework governing psychosocial risk management in Croatia. Three data collection efforts were integrated to provide a picture of the key approaches, challenges and trends in managing psychosocial risks among the Croatian establishments employing up to 49 persons.

2 Legal and policy context

This chapter provides an overview of the national policy context concerning the:

- main laws and policies;
- existence of any objectives, targets, monitoring and evaluation approaches;
- inspection regime concerning micro and small establishments (MSEs) and psychosocial risks;
- specific policy initiatives targeting MSEs on the issue of psychosocial risks;
- training and courses on psychosocial risk management;
- public awareness campaigns; and
- sector or collective bargaining initiatives that have a focus on psychosocial risks management.

2.1 Overview of the legal and policy context

The strategy on occupational safety and health (OSH) in Croatia was adopted in 2008 by the Croatian Parliament. The strategy is named **National Programme on Health Protection and Safety at Work for the period 2009-2013**[1] and its main goal is to ensure conditions for a healthy and safe working place with working conditions that will not lead to health deterioration.

The strategy has been prolonged until 2016. In 2017, the Croatian government started drafting the new strategy but due to the parliamentary elections and ongoing structural changes of different ministries, this work was prolonged and it was decided to finally merge this new strategy into the recent **National Plan for labour, safety at work and employment 2021-2027**.[2] This document is currently in the public consultation process and has not yet been formally adopted.

The main institutions responsible for OSH in Croatia are the following:

Croatian government

The government systematically monitors the situation in the field of occupational safety in the Republic of Croatia. In consultation with representatives of employers and workers, it determines, proposes, implements and systematically reviews occupational safety policy and proposes amendments to legislation to improve OSH, and has established a seven-member national council for occupational safety.

The government appoints this as its advisory body for occupational safety, and it consists of the Director of the Croatian Institute of Public Health (HZJZ), two representatives nominated by the minister responsible for labour, and two representatives of employers and workers nominated by representative associations of employers and workers.

The work of the council consists of the following activities:

1. It monitors, analyses and evaluates the system and policy of safety at work, and reports to the government on its findings and assessments and proposes any necessary changes.
2. It monitors the effects of the application of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, its implementing regulations, special laws and other regulations protecting the safety and health of workers in the Republic of Croatia and, if necessary, proposes changes to the government and their harmonisation with international regulations.

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[1] See: http://socijalno-partnerstvo.hr/nacionalno-vijece-za-zastitu-na-radu/nacionalni-program-zastite-zdravlja-i-sigurnosti-na-radu/

[2] This was confirmed in direct contact with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy; Directorate-General for Labour and Safety at Work.

3. It gives an opinion on draft statements on the assessment of the effects of regulations and on draft proposals of regulations in the field of occupational safety.
4. It proposes measures for the improvement of the occupational safety system in the Republic of Croatia.
5. It participates in organising the celebration of the National Day of Safety at Work.
6. It performs other tasks at the request of the government.

Croatian Institute of Public Health

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act and statute of the Croatian Institute of Public Health, this institute is a scientific institution for performing the activities of epidemiology of infectious diseases and chronic non-communicable diseases, public health and health promotion. The institute is a public institution established by its founder, the Republic of Croatia. The institute operates independently and its jurisdictions are as follows:

1. It monitors the state of safety at work;

2. It develops programmes, guides, methods and models for safety at work;

3. It determines the criteria and procedures related to the organisation of work adapted to workers;

4. It conducts statistical research in the field of occupational safety;

5. Within its competences, it cooperates with international and national organisations and professional and scientific institutions;

6. It prepares expert opinions on safety at work for various entities;

7. It provides professional assistance to employers' associations, trade unions, persons authorised for OSH and administrative;

8. It carries out actions in certain areas of health and safety at work and prepares promotional materials;

9. It acts and decides on administrative matters in a first-instance procedure in connection with the granting of authorisation to persons for occupational safety and the granting of approval to occupational safety experts;

10. It undertakes professional supervision and audits of the operations of authorised persons in relation to the authorisations obtained under relevant legislation; and

11. It submits work reports to the government by the end of May for the previous calendar year.

The Croatian Institute for Health Protection and Safety at Work (CIHPSW) was established in 1996 as the Croatian Institute for Occupational Medicine, which grew into a multidisciplinary institution at the national level in 2009 as part of the accession negotiations between the Republic of Croatia and the EU. The institute unites and improves professional activities in the field of health and safety at work in order to improve working conditions, prevent injuries at work and occupational diseases, preserve the health of workers and increase the efficiency of the economy of the Republic of Croatia. By the decision of the government of the Republic of Croatia and the entry into force of the Health Care Act NN 100/2018[3] of 14 November 2018, according to Article 273, the Croatian Institute of Public Health took over the CIHPSW and accordingly, starting from 1 January 2019, the CIHPSW continues to operate as the **Occupational Medicine Service of the Croatian Institute of Public Health**.

The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy carries out administrative and other tasks related to labour law, labour market, employment and active labour market policy, unemployment records and employment assistance, work retraining and employability enhancement programmes. The ministry carries out tasks related to the pension insurance system and social security policy, social dialogue and social partnership, and relations with employers, trade unions and their associations in the field of employment and labour law. The ministry also performs tasks regarding the employment status of Croatian nationals employed abroad and activities related to their return and employment in the country, the employment status and labour rights of foreign nationals working in the

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[3] See: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2018_11_100_1929.html

Republic of Croatia, and improvement of the occupational safety at work system, as well as international cooperation in the field of labour law, employment and social security.

2.2 Key legal requirements, and recent legislative proposals and revisions

While the strategy has remained unchanged since its adoption in 2008, the main legislation has been aligned over the years through several amendments of the **Work Safety Act** originally adopted in 2014 (Official Gazette 71/14 and its amendments 118/14, 94/18, 96/18).[4] This act sets the main legal framework for work safety while all main detailed provisions are scattered in numerous sub-regulations.

It is possible to conclude that this manner of regulation – with the main act serving just as a legal framework and specific requirements defined in numerous different ordinances and other documents – is a challenge for employers, especially in micro companies. A significant part of the legislation in this area is primarily focused on injuries at work, while the following two documents are specifically referring to psychosocial risks:

- **Occupational Health and Safety Act**

Article 51

1. The employer shall be obliged to implement stress prevention at work or in relation to work caused in particular by factors such as content of work, work organisation, working environment, poor communication and interpersonal relationships, in order to minimise the employee's need to overcome difficulties of long-term exposure to intense pressure and to eliminate the possibility of impairing the employee's work efficiency and of the deterioration of their condition.

2. If there are indications of stress at work or in relation to work, the employer shall be obliged to pay special attention to:

   a. the organisation of work and of work processes (working hours, level of independence, correspondence between the skills of the employees and work requirements, workload, etc.).

   b. working conditions and the environment (exposure of the employees and the employer to violent behaviour, noise, heat, cold, hazardous chemicals, etc.).

   c. communication (uncertainty about what is expected from work, prospects of work security or upcoming changes, etc.).

   d. subjective factors (emotional and social pressures, feeling of helplessness, feeling there is not enough support, etc.).

- **Ordinance on protection of workers exposed to statodynamic, psychophysiological and other exertions at work**

Article 13

1. The employer shall be obliged to assess psychosocial risks as part of a risk assessment.

2. When assessing psychosocial risks, it is necessary to take into account the risks listed in Annex V to this ordinance, which is annexed to this ordinance and forms an integral part thereof, adapted from the framework agreement relating to workplace stress.

3. When the risk assessment determines that a particular psychosocial risk is assessed as a high psychosocial risk, specialists in occupational medicine/occupational medicine and sports participate in the development and implementation of preventive measures, and if it is deemed necessary by occupational medicine/occupational medicine and sports specialists, psychologists also participate.

4. Specialists in occupational medicine/occupational medicine and sports and psychologists participate in the education of workers on the prevention of psychosocial risks in accordance with the regulations governing the manner of conducting specific health care for workers.

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[4] See: https://www.zakon.hr/z/167/Zakon-o-za%C5%A1titi-na-radu

5. The occupational medicine/occupational and sports medicine specialist is obliged to take appropriate preventive measures when they notice that the worker shows signs and symptoms of disease that may be caused by psychosocial risks at the workplace.

6. Article 14

7. The employee is obliged to act in accordance with the instructions of the employer to prevent, eliminate or reduce the level of psychosocial risks and consequent stress at work or in connection with work.

8. Workers and their representatives are obliged to cooperate with the employer in order to prevent, eliminate or reduce the level of psychosocial risks and stress at work or in connection to work

A recently adopted regulation specifically targets challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidance for employers and employees[5] is focused just on prevention of COVID-19, security measures, equipment and so on, without consideration of psychosocial risks and stress and how to manage these in this specific situation.

At this point, Croatia does not have a clear psychosocial risk management strategy in place. However, in the National Plan for labour, safety at work and employment 2021-2027,[6] which will be adopted on the basis of the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia by 2030, special attention is paid to the prevention of psychosocial risks and stress through the introduction of additional activities.

In order to improve health and safety at work, one of the measures of the National Plan will be to increase the awareness of employers and workers about the importance of prevention in the field of safety and health at work. It is important to stress that the social partners have participated in the development of the National Plan and related measures.

Furthermore, currently, the Croatian Institute of Public Health provides guidelines on risk assessment and management of psychosocial risks, covering issues such as:[7]

- definition of psychosocial risks and stress;
- what psychosocial risks are;
- what work stress is;
- how to recognise stress;
- what the consequences of stress are;
- why psychosocial risks and work stress should be managed;
- in which manner psychosocial risks and work stress can be managed;
- how to assess psychosocial risks;
- identification of risks and risky work groups;
- assessment and prioritisation of risks;
- selection of preventive measures;
- implementation of measures and their supervision;
- evaluation of implemented measures; and
- definition of preventive measures.

2.3 Inspection regime for MSEs with a focus on psychosocial risks management

The inspection regime varies depending on company size. It is more often found in larger companies. It is focused on fulfilling formal legal obligations and less (that is, not at all) on psychosocial risks and/or their management.

The State Inspectorate is divided into operational sectors and one of them is the labour inspectorate sector. In relation to psychosocial risks, its main task is checking the compliance with the legislation and other regulatory acts in relation to the working hours and minimum resting time of workers. The primary

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[5] See: http://uznr.mrms.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UPUTA%20_ZA_POSLODAVCE_I_RADNIKE_COVID_19_letak_rujan.pdf
[6] Information was provided by the EU-OSHA Focal Point in Croatia on 31 August 2021.
[7] See: http://www.hzzzsr.hr/index.php/psihosocijalni-rizici/

focus of these checks is the compliance related to scheduling of working hours; overtime work; redistribution of working time; night work; shift work; part-time work and provisions on the use of the right to daily breaks; daily, weekly and annual leave; and the obligation to keep records of workers and working hours.

The Work Protection Act[8] itself doesn't define how regular these visits should be, but the labour inspectorate[9] is stressing that they will promptly react in the following cases:

- Regarding notification of the employer, authorised person, the health and safety representative, or the worker themselves about the refusal of work due to the direct risk to life and health caused by the non-application of the rules of safety at work.
- Regarding the submissions of workers, commissioners of workers for safety at work, workers' council, trade unions, and other legal and natural persons on the observed illegalities in the field of safety at work.

2.4 Training and courses focusing on psychosocial risks

Specific training and courses focusing on psychosocial risks do not exist on the national level. The Work Safety Act defines that each company employing more than 50 employees must establish a Work Safety Committee and one of its tasks must be organisation of work safety trainings. Companies with fewer than 50 employees must have a trained OSH officer.[10] Training of employees (that is, future OSH officers in companies) covers just OSH in general, with a focus on prevention of injuries. There is no focus on psychosocial risks. Training is implemented by licensed companies or accredited occupational safety experts employed by the employer.

2.5 Public awareness campaigns

The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy participated, together with campaign partners, in the implementation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) campaign Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress. The following are links to free-of-charge workshops and seminars related to stress organised by various institutions (public institutions, trade unions) in the period 2014/2015:

https://stampar.hr/hr/upravljanje-stresom-za-zdravo-mjesto-rada-europski-tjedan-sigurnosti-i-zdravlja-na-radu-19-do-23

https://uznr.mrms.hr/seminar-radionica-o-stresu-i-izradi-procjene-rizika-odrzana-u-splitu/

https://www.hsuir.hr/vijesti/najave/okrugli-stol-psihosocijalni-rizici-i-stres-na-radnom-mjestu

https://uznr.mrms.hr/u-zupanijskoj-komori-karlovac-odrzan-seminar-upravljanje-stresom-i-izazovi-procjene-rizika/

https://sindikatzdravstva.hr/2014/05/seminar-zastita-mentalnog-zdravlja-na-radnom-mjestu-stres-problem-ili-izazov-zagreb-06-06-2014/

https://uznr.mrms.hr/seminar-radionica-o-stresu-i-izradi-procjene-rizika-odrzana-u-splitu/

https://uznr.mrms.hr/odrzana-radionica-rad-i-zivot-u-ravnotezi/

https://umzvs.com.hr/korisne-informacije/odrzana-online-radionica-prevencija-i-zastita-od-stresa-na-radnom-mjestu/

There were no significant public awareness campaigns related to psychosocial risks implemented by the relevant authority after the period 2014/2015.

The only data available are currently published guidance by the Croatian Institute of Public Health related to 'maintaining mental health by combating the negative effects of anxiety and stress' related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations[11] cover the following topics:

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[8] Official Gazette: NN 71/14, 118/14, 154/14 , 94/18, 96/18
[9] See: https://dirh.gov.hr/o-drzavnom-inspektoratu-9/ustrojstvo-77/13-sektor-inspekcije-rada/364
[10] See: http://uznr.mrms.hr/nastavni-program-usavrsavanja-za-posao-specijalistaice-zastite-na-radu/
[11] See: https://www.koronavirus.hr/savjeti/program-za-ocuvanje-mentalnog-zdravlja-borbom-protiv-negativnih-utjecaja-tjeskobe-i-stresa/442

- ways of coping with stress (beneficial and damaging behaviours);
- instructions for breathing exercises;
- instructions for progressive muscle relaxation;
- procedures for dealing with disturbing thoughts; and
- recommendations for listening to music to relax and improve sleep.

Besides that, there are only a few examples of activities in this area, such as the national programme 'To live healthy'.[12] The programme was adopted in 2015 and includes the project 'Company, friend of health', which is aimed at employees and encourages the introduction of special certificates for work environments that enable employees to adopt healthy living habits, promote health in the workplace and show positive concern for employee health. To determine if a company meets the requirements, a team of experts from the Croatian Institute of Public Health visits companies and holds lectures for company employees according to defined topics: proper nutrition, physical activity, health and food safety, workplace abuse and stress management, smoking, alcohol, drug abuse and gambling, the environment and health. The certificate 'Friend of Health' is awarded to the companies for a period of two years. The purpose of the project is comprehensive improvement of health in the workplace through employee education, implementation and adjustments within the working environment and strengthening the ability of the working population to preserve and improve their own health. The last time the aforementioned certificate was awarded was in 2019 and there is no evidence that this practice has continued in the following years.

2.6 Sector or collective bargaining initiatives that have a focus on psychosocial risk management

From currently available data, there are no collective bargaining initiatives with a focus on psychosocial risks and/or their management. Further research confirmed this finding. Namely, only public services and employees of local governments are signing collective contracts (for example, Collective contract for public services,[13] Collective contract for employees of Zagreb City[14]), and even those contracts are just defining health of employees in general without a focus on psychosocial risks:

> *'The contract defines the obligations of the employer and the obligations of workers for protection and safety at work, the task of the commissioner of workers for safety at work, conditions for its operation, the possibility of supplementary health insurance and the possibility of systematic health examination once a year and preventing stress in the workplace.'[15]*

3 ESENER 2019 country-level results

This chapter provides an analysis of the ESENER 2019 country-level results to provide an overview of key national trends impacting the management of psychosocial risks in MSEs, including the:

- inspection regime and reasons for compliance;
- employee representation methods; and
- establishment-level responses to psychosocial risk management.

We also consider how the situation has changed since the Second European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER 2014).

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[12] See: https://zdravstvo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Programi%20i%20projekti%20-%20Ostali%20programi/NP%20%C5%BDivjeti%20zdravo.pdf
[13] See: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2017_12_128_2946.html
[14] See: http://www1.zagreb.hr/zagreb/slglasnik.nsf/7ffe63e8e69827b5c1257e1900276647/027e005ab6949238c1257cba003ea06b?OpenDocument
[15] See: http://www.kolektivni-ugovori.info/sadrzaj-kolektivnih-ugovora/

3.1 Inspection regime and reasons for compliance

Frequency of inspections

In the 2016-2019 period, a total of 53% of establishments were visited by labour inspectorates. While this is a large proportion compared to other EU countries, it has decreased since the ESENER 2014 survey, where a total of 60% was reported. It is interesting to notice the increase only in the large company size group where all ESENER 2019 respondents confirmed that they were visited by a labour inspectorate in comparison with ESENER 2014 when 90% of companies in this size group reported labour inspectorate visits. This is especially visible in companies of the 10-49 employees size group – while the number of visits between the two surveys was reduced by 11%, the total number of companies in this size group has grown in the 2014-2019 period by 16% (Eurostat[16]).

Figure 1: Establishments reported being visited by the labour inspectorate in the last 3 years – by company size (% of establishments)
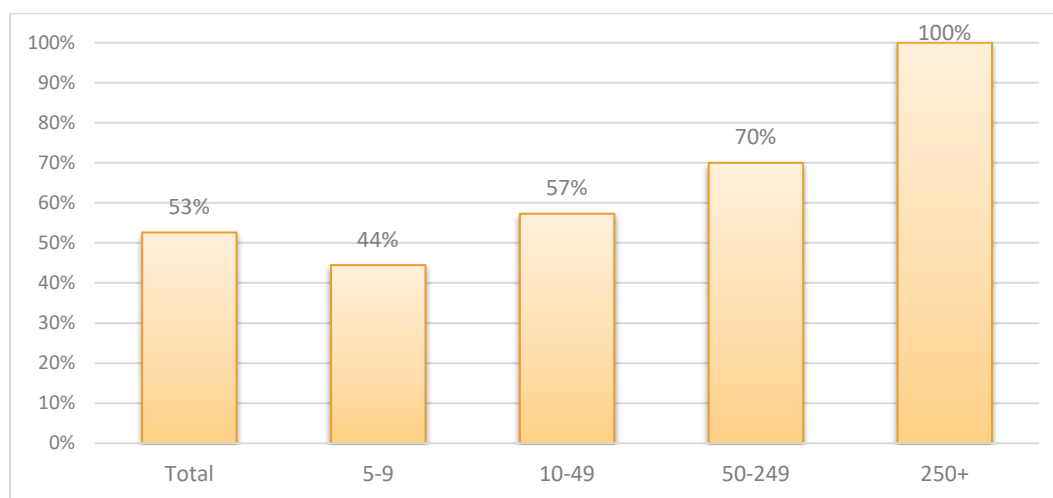
Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

Reasons for compliance

Both surveys show that the main drivers for addressing health and safety issues are avoiding fines from the labour inspectorate and fulfilling legal obligations. The organisation's reputation and increased productivity are the least relevant drivers. This leads us to two presumptions:

1. Reason for compliance may often be fear of potential fines.

2. Awareness could be increased.

This is visible in all size classes.

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[16] See: Eurostat - Annual enterprise statistics by size class for special aggregates of activities (table: sbs_sc_sca_r2)

Figure 2: Reasons for addressing health and safety in establishments – by company size (% of establishments)
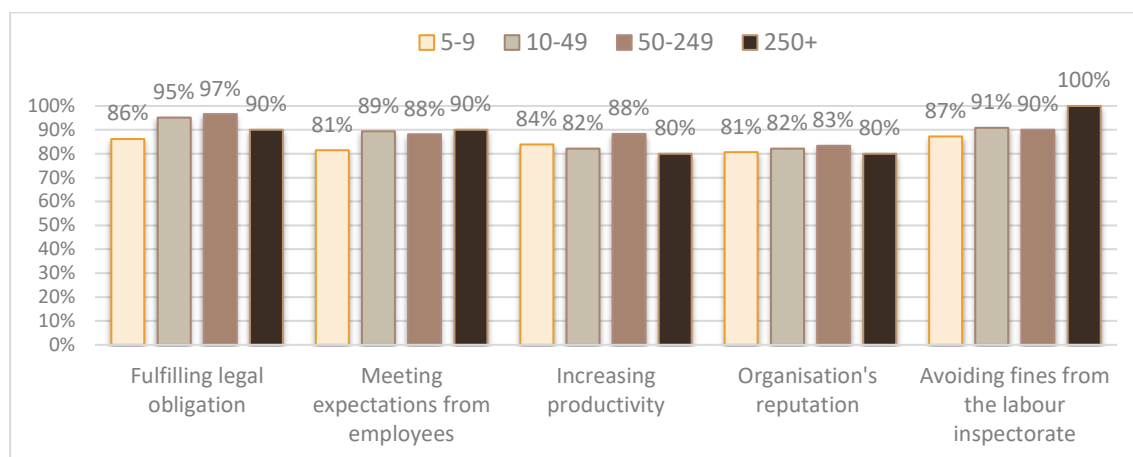
Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

3.2 Employee representation methods

Forms of representation

Overall, it is possible to establish a correlation between organisation size and level of representation, with larger companies having higher levels of employee representation. This is, of course, to be expected given that existing legal obligations are much stricter for larger companies and they are legally obliged to include employees' representatives. On the opposite side, smaller companies probably have less formal manners of representations as there is less of a need to formalise these legally.

When comparing the period between the two surveys, the situation is significantly changed in two groups:

1. Health and safety committee – while in ESENER 2014 only 15% of respondents had this form of representation, in ESENER 2019 their share increased to 27% (+12 percentage points)

2. Health and safety representative – while in ESENER-2014 55% of respondents had this form of representation, in ESENER-2019 their share increased to 63% (+8 percentage points).

Figure 3: Forms of employee representation in the establishments – by company size (% of establishments)
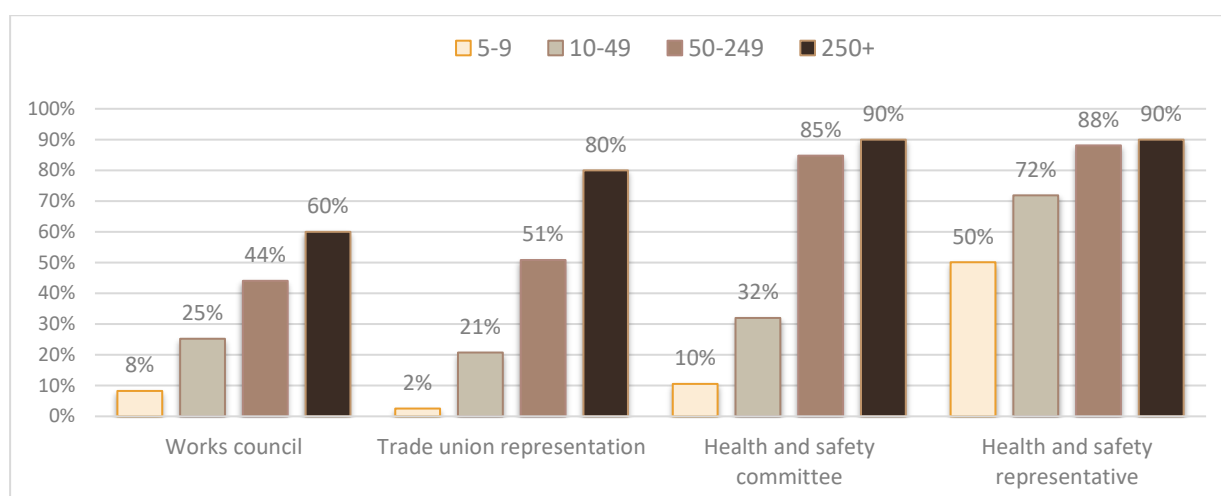
Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

Representative election methods

This category in ESENER 2019 also shows correlation with the size classes, with larger companies more likely to have representative election models than smaller companies. We can presume that the smaller companies are family companies and/or companies where the owner decides on the majority of issues and topics, whilst higher and more complex legal obligations encourage larger companies to include employees to a larger extent in the election process.

Figure 3: The ways that health and safety representatives are elected in the establishment – by company size (% of establishments)

Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

Frequency of discussions

Overall, data show that discussions about health and safety matters are held regularly only in 28% of organisations. This has dropped in comparison with ESENER 2014 (33% of respondents, 5 percentage point deterioration). Furthermore, Croatia is lagging in this area behind the EU average, especially countries such as Denmark (63%), the Netherlands (55%) and Germany (52%).

In both surveys, it is possible to establish positive correlation related to the company size, with larger companies more likely to regularly discuss health and safety matters than smaller ones.

It is not possible to fully compare the two other categories since in ESENER 2014 they are defined as 'Only when particular issues arise' and 'Not at all', while ESENER 2019 defined the other two options as 'Occasionally' and 'Practically never'.
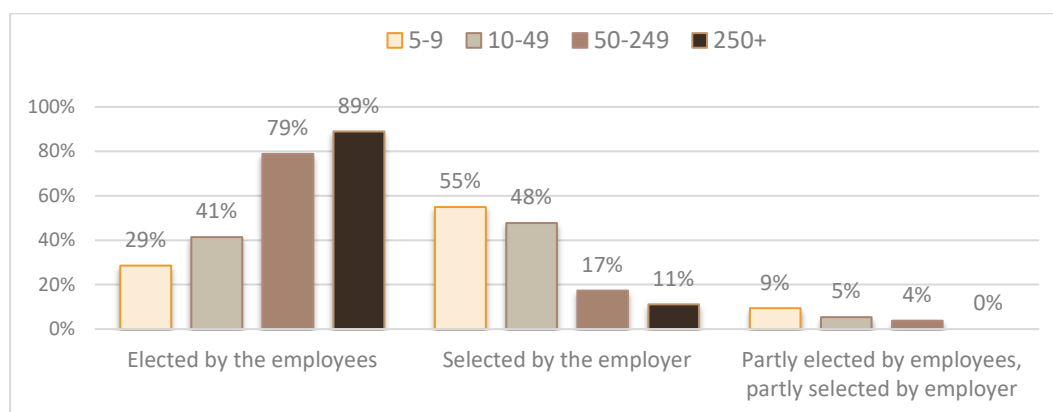
Figure 4: Frequency of discussion of health and safety matters between employee representatives and the management – by company size (% of establishments)
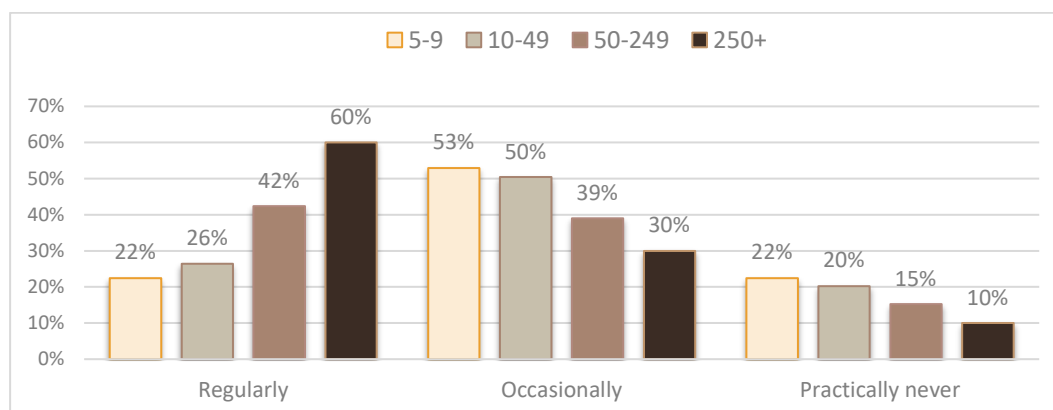
Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

3.3 Establishment-level responses to psychosocial risk management

Identification of psychosocial risks

The most frequently reported psychosocial risk factors in all size classes are related to difficult customers and time pressure. ESENER 2019 responses in these two categories correspond with ESENER 2014 responses. The main change in the 2014-2019 period is the answer to job insecurity. While in 2014 31% of respondents considered this issue as present, that share significantly reduced in 2019 to 14% of respondents (17 percentage point decrease). This can be attributed to a few major factors that affected the Croatian economy at that time:

1. Since the 2008 economy crisis, Croatia lagged behind EU economic recovery and caught its pace significantly later than other economies.

2. The Croatian economy is significantly dependent on tourism and 2019 was a record year in that regard.

3. The majority of EU countries terminated working quotas for the Croatian labour force during the time between the second and the third wave of ESENER.

A combination of the abovementioned factors increased the demand side in the labour market while the supply side was significantly reduced. The abovementioned probably resulted in employees feeling higher job security.

Figure 5: Psychosocial risks identified in the establishments – by company size (% of establishments)

Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

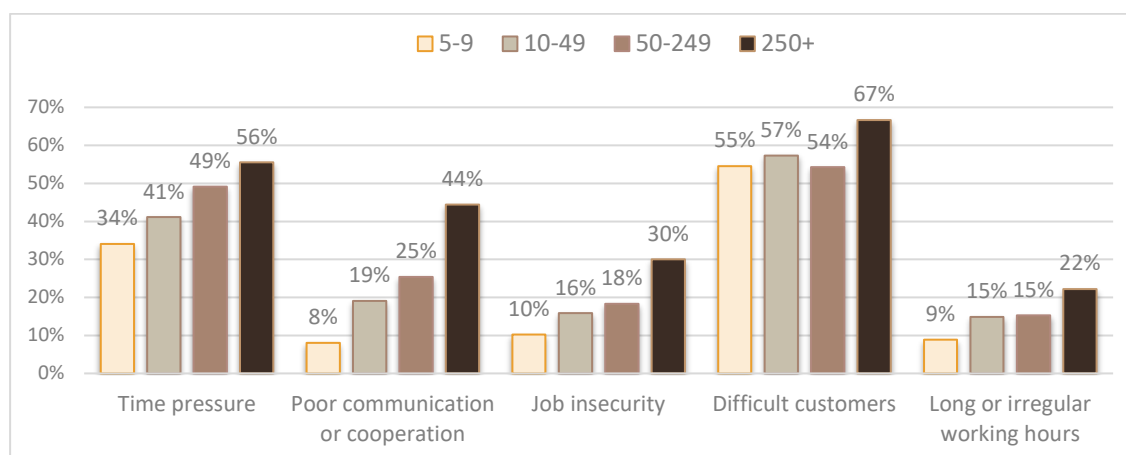### Introduction of action plans to prevent work-related stress

In Croatia, the share of companies that introduce action plans to reduce work-related stress is 15.2%, which is below the EU average of 35%. Action plans are most often introduced among organisations with 250+ employees. This might be related to legal requirements but also to a higher level of organisation in these companies, as well as larger human resources and internal expertise.

It is interesting to note that in both surveys, a slightly higher share of small organisations introduced action plans when compared to mid-size organisations.

In comparison to 2014, the introduction of action plans has increased from 9% to 15% in 2019. Although there is no evidence from the ESENER 2019 survey on the underlying reasons, a possible explanation of this rising trend is the influence of international practices (for example, if a foreign owner of a company introduces a practice that is already present in some of its other international offices) or it could be the employee retention measure, which also helps in the employer's branding.

Figure 6: Introduction of action plans to reduce work-related stress in the establishments – by company size (% of establishments)

Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

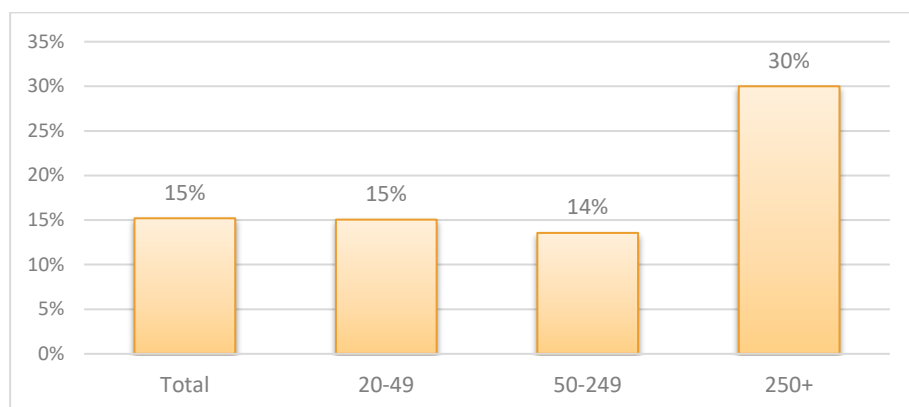## *Introduction of procedures to deal with bullying and violence*

Data are showing that the organisations report having in place procedures to deal with internal bullying and harassment more often than procedures on how to deal with abuse or assault by external persons. Availability of both procedures were reported more frequently by the larger companies.

In almost all cases, improvement is noticed in the 2014-2019 period with the exception of mid-size organisations, which have lower results in the category 'Possible cases of threats, abuse or assaults by external persons' from 56% of them with established procedures in 2014 to 44% in 2019 (12% deterioration).

It is also possible to connect answers to this question to a previous topic, that is, 'Identification of psychosocial risks'. The majority of companies are focused on internal risks while the external risks are less relevant to employers despite the fact that the most important psychosocial risk recognised in ESENER 2019 was having to deal with difficult customers, pupils, patients, and so on. It seems the companies are not focused enough on the external risk topics. This additionally reinforces the conclusion that there is much room for further improvement in the Croatian companies in relation to identifying and managing health and safety issues.

Figure 7: Establishments with procedures for dealing with possible cases of harassment and violence risks – by company size (% of establishments)
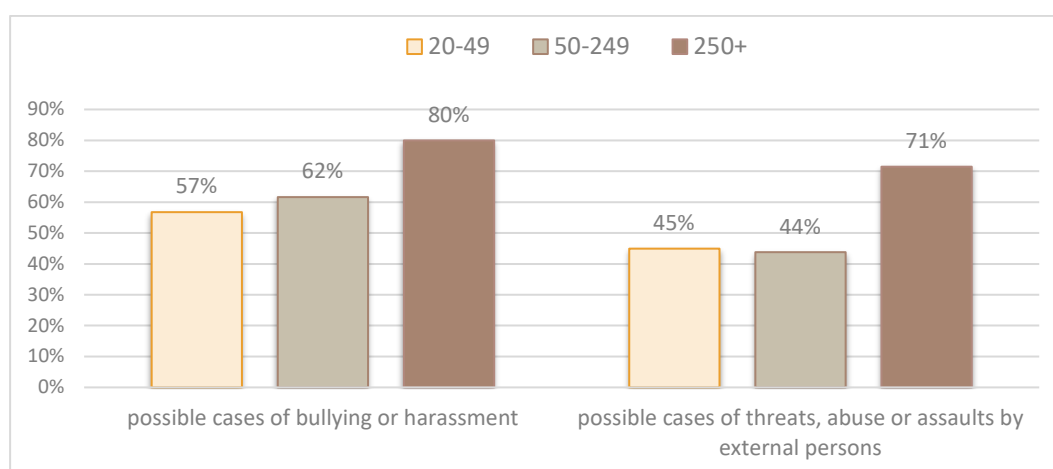
Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

Introduction of measures to prevent psychosocial risks

In comparison to the EU average, the introduction of measures for psychosocial risks in establishments is also one of the categories where Croatia is lagging behind.

The most preferred option of measures is to allow employees to take more decisions on how to do their job and there is a negative correlation with organisation size. The second most preferred option in both surveys is reorganisation of work.

Figure 8: Measures for psychosocial risks used in establishments – by company size (% of establishments)
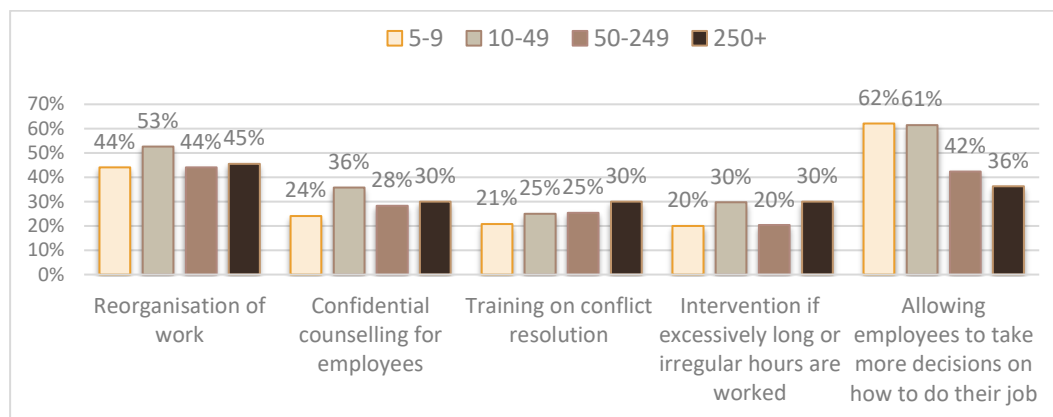
Source: Ecorys analysis of ESENER 2019 results

4   Main findings from the qualitative study

This chapter provides an analysis of feedback from establishments, considering common views reported by both managers and employees, and areas where key differences can be detected. The key areas assessed included:

1. the links between workplace culture, productivity, absenteeism and approaches to psychosocial management;

2. awareness level of psychosocial risk factors and obligation to manage them;

3. the links between psychosocial risk management and overall management commitment to OSH;

4. extent of psychosocial risk management and procedures in place;

5. dedicated resources and degree of worker participation; and

6. barriers and drivers to psychosocial risk management and support needed.

4.1 Sample of in-depth interviews

Table 1: Interviewees by size class and NACE code

No	Firm size	Sector
1	Small	Digital technologies
2	Small	Fire department
3	Micro	Electric installations
4	Small	Education
5	Micro	Municipality
6	Micro	Municipality
7	Micro	Business incubator
8	Small	Communication company
9	Small	Tourist company
10	Small	Education
11	Small	Agriculture
12	Small	Manufacturing
13	Small	Manufacturing
14	Small	Water management
15	Small	Professional services
16	Micro	Retail
17	Micro	Retail
18	Micro	Accommodation and food service
19	Micro	Education
20	Micro	Manufacturing
21	Small	Arts, entertainment and recreation

Source: Interviews conducted

In-depth interviews were conducted for 21 organisations (41 interviews). In total, 9 micro (1-9 employees) and 12 small (10-49 employees) organisations participated. Interviews were carried out from 9 December 2020 to 1 March 2021. In total, 155 organisations were contacted, all of them, including interviewed organisations, were ESENER 2019 participants. Twenty-one interviews were conducted with managers and 20 with employees.

4.2 The links between workplace culture, productivity, absenteeism and presenteeism and approaches to psychosocial risk management

Company culture

Common view

All interviewees agreed that company working culture is positive. Communication works in both directions, between employees as well at management-employees level. There were no problems reported in sharing concerns between employees and with management. The most commonly reported concerns are not related to work (for example, fear for parents' or children's health due to COVID-19). This positive view on working culture can be contributed to several factors such as company size (in micro companies, for example, direct communication is logical), smaller communities (rural areas where everybody already knows everyone outside work), job description (one of the interviewed organisations was the fire department, their lives depend on each other), and so on. It is worth noting that this culture in micro companies more often came spontaneously while in small companies it resulted from strategic planning and was initiated by management. Also, the size of the organisation correlates with the type of communication between management and employees, that is, it is direct in micro companies and mostly indirect in larger companies. All respondents also agreed that this culture hasn't changed with COVID-19 and the majority of concerns related to this topic were not work safety related but rather outside work (for example, kindergartens and schools not working and smaller children staying alone at home, older parents in the COVID-19 risk group, and so on).

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *'There are cases, primarily when people are under stress, that they do not react adequately to their colleagues. But that is why there is HR to smooth out such situations. There is an annual grading system where one of the goals is the so-called behavioural targets, a system that tells how employees should work together within the organisation and within the team, where teamwork and understanding towards other colleagues is promoted.'*

Absenteeism

Common view

All respondents agreed that there are no cases of absenteeism in their organisations in general. The only increase is related to the COVID-19 pandemic, that is, employees either infected or in isolation, but this issue was most often solved by reorganisation of work.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *'Some absenteeism is common for this sector during the season (peak in August, "slow" winters). Psychological risks are not related to this issue since employees are aware of the workload when they start, they are psychologically ready. If someone doesn't want to work overtime – it is allowed.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'Being mostly female employees, these are young moms who take sick leave because of the children, but they don't really take advantage of it.'*

Employee in a small firm:

*'As for overtime and absences, due to the COVID-19 situation in the past year
there is always someone in isolation or sick and others need to take on that part of
the job. This is a specific period. There are no frequent absences, but in this
situation with a pandemic it is frequent.'*

Productivity

Common view

All interviewees agree that management of psychosocial risks is important for productivity (happy worker – productive worker). There are differences in how this is being handled – from the ad hoc level to the more strategic approach, training of management and surveys of workers' satisfaction. Also, while there is a common agreement on the importance of this topic, there are still some companies (especially micro companies) that are actively not doing anything in relation to this topic.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no significant differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

'Only satisfied employees are productive, that is the basis of good relationships.'

4.3 Awareness level of psychosocial risk factors and obligation to manage them

Risk identification

Common view

The most common risk factor is fear of losing employment, from the perspectives of both the managers and the employees. The typical reason for this is the current difficult economic situation in Croatia and this has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic (even less work due to market disruptions caused by COVID-19 and, additionally, fear of infection). Another reason for this fear is restructuring of the public administration. Several of the public servants working in municipalities pointed to the fact that Croatia has been planning for a long time to reduce the number of municipalities so there is an actual risk that they are going to be merged with a larger municipality and the total number of public employees would be reduced.

High workload can also be a risk factor. This is usually linked to companies' business activities, for example, companies in agriculture have nature-related peaks in workload, those in the tourism sector in Croatia are busiest in August, and those in state companies/institutions have peaks mostly at the end of the year due to annual reporting. Some organisations are also working in high-stress environments (fire department, tourism), but in all those cases both management and employees concluded that this was/is expected and that they are prepared for that.

Risks in general have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in organisations working with customers/clients in direct contact on a day-to-day basis, and this also became more often a topic of concern among employees. It is also important to stress the two major earthquakes in 2020 that have significantly damaged the Croatian capital Zagreb and the central region (Banovina region). This has resulted in an additional stress factor in these areas (these areas cover more than a quarter of the Croatian population). While the majority of respondents did not report additional psychosocial risks caused by online work, there was one organisation with a significant increase of such psychological stress for the majority of employees (that is, one of the respondents was working in a school and they were combining 'regular' and online schooling, which literally doubled their workload). Also, while some respondents perceived working from home as a disadvantage, that is, less clear line between job and personal life, others considered it an advantage due to the flexibility it allows.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no significant differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *'There has been an increase in stress certainly, digital psychosocial risks have been identified. Educators, members of the professional team and principals are most exposed to cooperation with parents, while the technical staff does not have these problems and stress.'*

Employee in a small firm:

> *'It used to be maybe hard because there were no strict working hours and it was quite normal for my phone to ring at 7pm. But that wasn't a problem either, because instead of being in the office at 7am in the morning, I was available from home at 7pm in the evening and you just realise that these are the circumstances and you work without a problem. Before the pandemic, it used to irritate me if I got job calls outside working hours and if I had to finish something, but now, at the time of the pandemic, it doesn't, because such are the circumstances.'*

Legal awareness

Common view

None of the respondents from our interviews, managers or employees, were fully familiar with all the existing psychosocial risk legal requirements. Even those managers who were familiar with the legal framework were only familiar with OSH legislation in general. Due to the legal requirements, only the respondents from one small company had an in-house OSH officer who was more familiar with specific topics, while all other respondents tended to engage external OSH experts when needed.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no significant differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *'I am not familiar, I have read the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but I am not familiar with psychosocial risks.'*

Psychosocial awareness and response

Common view

The majority of respondents considered that there were no additional risks in comparison with the time before COVID-19, except for the increased fear of losing the job as a consequence of market disruptions related to COVID-19. Only a few respondents had adapted their business processes to the current situation related to COVID-19.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no significant differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *It's hard for me to talk about it because we're in such an environment that there's not really any risk.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'We have had some changes in working methods due to this pandemic. Something we didn't do before and now we do is shift work. We introduced this with the aim of meeting as little as possible in order to avoid the danger of simultaneous infection of many employees and thus bring into question the work of the association. These changes were initiated by the management of the association and accepted by the employees. This led to a relaxing attitude towards work as employees were minimally exposed to the risk of infection. I did not notice that there were any negative impacts resulting from these changes.'*

Awareness campaigns

Common view

None of the respondents were aware of any public campaigns related to psychosocial risk management in the more recent period (for example, in the last three years), with the exception of reference to a mobbing campaign.[17]

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Employee in a micro firm:

> *'I can't think of a single campaign with that topic, maybe a campaign on the topic of mobbing a couple of years ago, but I don't remember the public response [that is, the reach and effect of the campaign].'*

Role of inspectorate

Common view

A significant number of respondents answered that they were not visited by the labour inspectorate (some of them even in the last 10 years). Those who were visited agreed that their visits are mostly focused on formal issues such as contracts and annual leave. Respondents agreed that the work of the inspectorates should be focused on education rather than penalisation.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *'There were no labour inspections and therefore they are not a motive in strengthening the approach to psychosocial risk management. They have never given us any guidelines or measures, all we are doing is our initiative to provide ourselves with better conditions.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'Labour inspections do not motivate the work of [nursery schools] at all, they should have a partnership relationship, and this mainly comes down to punishment. Most often we [nursery schools] undergo a sanitary inspection – they always come with the attitude that something is wrong. They should not perceive us that way, they should motivate us.'*

Employee in a small firm:

> *'I think that the labour inspection could motivate the associations to pay more attention to the prevention and occurrence of these risks, but they are still working according to the old model. It is important for them to check whether the compensation of workers is paid in time, whether the contracts are in accordance with the law, whether the workers have the proper equipment for protection at work without entering into the part concerning the psychological aspect of the employees. In the last three years, we didn't have a single visit from the labour inspection. We had a tax inspection visits twice but no labour inspection. We have no benefit from labour inspection when it comes to prevention and addressing psychosocial risks.'*

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[17] Implemented in 2016. In addition, as a part of the campaign, one guidebook was published and revised in 2018. See: https://mobbing.hr/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Priru%C4%8Dnik-o-diskriminaciji-i-mobingu-na-radnom-mjestu-BRO%C5%A0URA-4.10.2018.pdf

4.4 The links between psychosocial risk management and overall management commitment to occupational health and safety

OSH management organisation

Common view

In the majority of organisations, there is no systematic OSH management. Most efforts are focused only on complying with legal requirements such as job systematisation[18] and general accompanying physical risks. Some of the respondents have OSH officers and draft annual OSH reports, but these are mostly focused on physical risks.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'There is a document that organises the management of health and safety at work, and that is the Risk Assessment. Psychosocial risks are not specifically mentioned in risk assessment documents. There are chemical risks, risks of handling machines, psychosocial risks are not mentioned.'*

Employee in a micro firm:

> *'We have a risk assessment, we go for regular check-ups, we have forklifts and employees are trained to operate the machine, mostly it all comes down to physical health.'*

External OSH services

Common view

The majority of respondents used health services, but not in order to review or strengthen their approach to psychosocial risk management. These services were used only to examine the physical health of employees (specialists in working medicine), very rarely their psychological state. While some respondents were legally obliged to send their employees to those exams on an annual basis due to their job description, other respondents did this on a voluntary basis. Only one small-size company organised additional psychosocial phone support for its employees. In general, all respondents were satisfied with the quality of working medicine specialists.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'All employees are insured and we have contract with external health facilities. Mandatory annual check-up, but no one made additional use of additional psychological help options (despite the fact it was available).*

Risk assessments

Common view

Workplace risk assessment is mandatory in Croatia. In the studied sample, in the majority of cases, psychosocial risks were not included. Nevertheless, the majority of small companies draft annual risk assessments. One of the respondents reported that they draft them on a project basis. However, neither annual nor project-based risk assessments are significantly dedicated to the assessment of psychosocial risks.

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[18] While drafting the work positions and job descriptions (so-called systematisation), the company must define the related risks for each position.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'We are addressing these risks, especially recently due to the pandemic and earthquake situation but it mostly comes down to informal conversations.'*

Employee in a micro firm:

> *'It is carried out once in two years I think, I think it is quite effective, each job has its own requirements and it is thoroughly defined. Psychosocial risks have not been identified. There is no procedure for dealing with possible cases of violence or harassment, either externally or internally.'*

4.5 Extent of psychosocial risk management and procedures in place

Actions to prevent psychosocial risks

Common view

The majority of respondents were implementing actions in order to prevent psychosocial risks. There is a clear correlation with company size. While in micro companies these actions were mostly focused on increased communication with employees, in small companies the approach was more organised and structured and includes different presentations and trainings. Only one micro company in the interviewed sample was committing more time and effort to this issue (see below quotation of manager in micro firm). In the majority of cases these actions were initiated by company management.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'A measure that helps prevent psychosocial risks is to talk on a regular basis. Since there are not many of us, we can all sit down and talk about each employee and their responsibilities and possible psychosocial risks. Also, some of the measures we used to prevent psychosocial risks are: confidential consultations with employees, conflict resolution trainings, overtime interventions and freedom of employees to make decisions.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'Actions have been taken: External experts, internal communication (two- way), new guides for heads of units – it was expected it will result in positive changes; management towards employees – currently they are effective, positive response of employees (in general), no negative comments from employees.'*

Training

Common view

Despite the legal obligations to provide training, in the majority of interviewed micro companies there were no formal trainings available. Some small companies were implementing OSH trainings but no respondents mentioned that they have included psychosocial risks in these. In small companies, this type of training is most often available only to OSH officers. None of the micro company respondents considered that they have sufficient internal resources for these trainings.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'We conduct consultations with employees ourselves.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'For the area of health and safety the company was organising courses in the form of webinars and they were implemented by external companies. Employees also had the first aid courses and working at height courses. In my opinion, the company provides employees with even more than what is legally required.'*

Types of useful training

Common view

The majority of respondents considered that they could benefit from additional training related to their daily work as well as OSH in general. Only a few respondents mentioned training related to psychosocial risks as needed. Related to target groups, answers were mostly very vague and only one respondent had a clearer picture that the focus of trainings should be on the mid-management as a link between employees and higher management.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

> *'Further trainings are needed for lower management which directly communicates with employees and is familiar with their issues. Trainings should address issues such as how to teach people to cope with stress, how to communicate with employees, how to function in larger working communities.'*

Effectiveness of procedures

Common view

In comparison with previous interview questions, this is the most neglected area. The large majority of respondents indicated that their organisations didn't have an action plan to prevent work-related stress. This information indicates low priority of psychosocial risk in companies that considered regular communication as the best approach to this topic.

The majority of respondents didn't have any formal procedures related to bullying and harassment, and situations such as those are solved informally on an ad hoc basis.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'As I said a moment ago, we do not use any special risk management measures. For now, we are successfully solving everything by talking to each other and directly pointing out the shortcomings. In such a small collective, like ours, conversation proved to be the best method.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'I believe that there is not such a need for some procedures, only open communication when conflict or some issue occurs.'*

Employee in a small firm:

> *'As I said, there are no special procedures to prevent and address these risks. We meet every morning for coffee and before work we talk about everything related to work. Here, each of us has the freedom to present any problem or suggestion when it comes to our work or the work of one of our colleagues.'*

Manager in a small firm:

"In these cases, employees can contact a supervisor or human resources department. If they do not get a satisfactory answer, there is a higher level, there is even a centralized system called integrity where they can anonymously report mobbing."

4.6 Dedicated resources and degree of worker participation

Employee involvement in risk identification

Common view

In the majority of cases, employees are involved in risk identification through informal conversations. Their frequency varies significantly from respondent to respondent, from daily to annual basis. The majority of respondents also agreed that a decision on whether some proposal will be accepted and implemented doesn't depend on who proposed it but rather the quality and feasibility of the proposal.

Since all respondents answered that employees are in general involved in risk identification, all agreed that the only excluded employees are those who didn't want to participate in this activity.

Differences between managers and employees

Although all employees agreed that they are being consulted, in some cases they think that their contribution is being ignored.

Manager in a micro firm:

'We generally accept the suggestions of our employees, but we, the owners, propose and solve most things related to the company's business. It all depends on how constructive these proposals are.'

Employee in a micro firm:

'I think the reason for this is insufficient interest in the application of proposals and conclusions by management and insufficient commitment because it is considered that these risks are not such that they can seriously affect the work of employees.'

Manager in a micro firm:

'We do not force workers who are not interested in getting involved in making proposals to improve the work of the company by reducing risk. We give them the opportunity to assess for themselves whether there is a need to react. If they feel that their participation is not necessary, we agree with it.'

Employee in a micro firm:

'Some of the workers, due to their personal nature, do not want to participate in anything that is outside their job.'

4.7 Barriers and drivers to psychosocial risk management and support needed

Main drivers

Common view

For the majority of respondents, the main driver for psychosocial management is to satisfy legal requirements and the second driver is the satisfaction of employees (related to previous topic of increased efficiency). The majority of respondents also agreed that psychosocial risks are much harder to identify and manage due to their nature – they require an individual approach as different people will be affected differently in the same situation. This means that the same approach to problem solving cannot be used to address issues experienced by different employees.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no major differences between the management and employee points of view.

Employee in a small firm:

> *'Management's awareness that employees should be satisfied and rewarded for their work and contribution at work is very important because if workers are satisfied, there is less stress at work and less engagement on the part of management is needed. In this case, the management can be more dedicated to promoting our association and finding new work from which we will all benefit.'*

Government or sectoral responsibilities

Common view

There was a common agreement of all interviewees that there were no government or sectoral initiatives in organising/addressing psychosocial risk management at their company.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no major differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'There were no such initiatives either by inspections or by any other governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations.'*

Main barriers

Common view

The majority of respondents agreed that the main barriers to psychosocial risk management are related to the individuality of this topic (that is, it depends on the person) and insufficient expertise for its implementation.

One of the responses is very significant for the understanding of psychosocial risks and their assessment and management. Namely, one of the managers stressed that psychosocial risks are still a taboo topic in Croatia and that is clearly reflected at all levels – from state regulation/interventions to the level of companies that are not addressing this issue appropriately.

Differences between managers and employees

Some of the employees considered that the main barriers are related to company management since they are the decision-makers and there is not enough interest in this topic.

Manager in a micro firm:

> *'I don't know what could be difficult except that not everyone can solve these kinds of problems. I think that, nevertheless, an expert should be hired to help solve such risks.'*

Manager in a small firm:

> *'For this matter, an expert is needed to handle it. In my opinion, this is a taboo topic in our country, in fact it should be encouraged to talk about it. According to one U.S. study, more firefighters became diagnosed with PTSD after the attack on the World Trade Center than soldiers who returned from Afghanistan.'*

Employee in a micro firm:

> *'All the problem comes from the top. Management is the one who needs to put the company on its feet. Their instructions must be as clear as possible so that later in the work there would be no confusion that could cause misunderstanding among employees. If they are not able to run the company in the right way and establish a good distribution of work then this can be a source of much dissatisfaction among all employees.'*

Mitigating solutions

Common view

While the majority of respondents were able to identify different mitigation solutions, only a few respondents reported that they were actually implementing mitigation measures. Respondents' potential solutions most often referred to the specific trainings of employees (although the majority of them previously responded that psychosocial risks are mostly identified and managed through the conversations with employees). Here, managers said that training needed to be organised, and employees stressed that training needed to be organised by management.

Differences between managers and employees

There were no major differences between the management and employee points of view.

Manager in a small firm:

'We are implementing measures for stress reduction: more communication, changes in the organisation of work, planned surveys of employees. This resulted in reduced stress, everything functions better. Information exchange functions on daily basis and there are sufficient human resources to handle this issue. The main source of information is feedback from employees which is also the cause of the main information gap (someone maybe doesn't want to say what bothers him/her, is too shy…). The preferred data source would be advisory services, website, Q&A with authorities.'

Employee in a micro firm:

'As I said earlier, there were no special approaches in preventing and mitigating psychosocial risks. Management is satisfied if there are no problems between employees that may affect the normal operation of the company and customer relations. As long as that is the case, they do not react and the company can function normally.'

Measures introduced

Common view

Very few companies have implemented any concrete measures for psychosocial risk reduction. In cases where new measures have been implemented, respondents suggested that these were sufficient. When implemented, the main actors were management and initiatives and their implementation were led by them, together with internal human resources. Concrete measures implemented were reduction of work time and delegation of work/responsibilities to more people.

Differences between managers and employees

Employees were mostly not aware of any measures being implemented.

Manager in a small firm:

'Combination of higher and lower management in the following manner: Screening, changes, delegation of responsibilities to more persons. The company used internal human resources and measures are effective.'

Manager in a micro firm:

'The most concrete example is the reduction of working hours of our institution and this proposal was very well received by employees. They have become much more efficient because they want to complete their part of the obligations for that working time so that the institution survives so as not to interrupt its work.'

Other external measures

Common view

All interviewees agreed that there is insufficient state support related to OSH. For the majority of respondents, the solution would be policy and legal regulation of this area accompanied by regular trainings and workshops implemented by the relevant state institutions.

Differences between managers and employees

Some of the employees reported that they were not even familiar with current work legislation, including their OSH rights and that state-organised trainings and awareness-raising campaigns would be welcomed.

Employee in a micro firm:

> *'Well, maybe, to make workers better aware of their rights, as well as the owners to be aware of their responsibilities in order to avoid abuse of employees' rights. Such changes could be initiated by state institutions in charge of safety at work in order to preserve the physical and mental health of workers.'*

5 Reflections on the internal and external dynamics of psychosocial risk management

This chapter provides further reflections on the internal and external dynamics and the establishments' answers provided concerning psychosocial risks management, including:

- influence of the national policy context on establishments; and
- reflections on the ESENER 2019 participating establishments' responses.

ESENER-2019 as well as all interviews conducted clearly show two key issues:

1. Respondents were not aware of the legal measures in relation to psychosocial risks. While OSH in general is recognised in the labour-related legislation (especially due to EU acquis), the current legal framework and the related inspection activities are not forcing the employers to be more dedicated to the identification and management of psychosocial risks.
2. Since answers in ESENER-2019 and interviews are mostly aligned, this suggests that the situation has not changed significantly over time on a voluntarily basis, that is, they have been initiated purely by the companies themselves on the basis of the increased internal awareness of the importance of identification and management of psychosocial risks.

Due to the lack of clearly defined legal measures, it is not possible to identify key policy drivers and/or their effects.

ESENER 2019 and interview responses are consistent in relation to trainings – trainings organised by relevant state institutions do not exist. Psychosocial risk identification and management trainings are only organised by some companies themselves and at their own cost.

ESENER 2019 and interview responses are also consistent related to the topic of public campaigns – neither respondents to ESENER 2019 or to the interviews were familiar with any public awareness campaigns.

6 Conclusions

Legal framework-related OSH is defined in acts and then **dispersed in an extensive number of ordinances** and other provisions. **A framework related specifically to psychosocial risks** can be found in Articles 51 and 52 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act** and also Articles 13 and 14 of the **Ordinance on Protection of Workers Exposed to Statodynamic, psychophysiological and other exertions at work**.

Interviewees reported that the **working culture is very good** and none had any objections related to this issue. **Absenteeism is not high**. In the majority of cases, the **approach to psychosocial risk management is individual through direct communication and without any formal written procedures**.

The fear of losing employment was most frequently reported as a cause of stress, triggered by the economic situation in Croatia **and increased by additional market disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic**. Due to lockdown restrictions, the most affected were/are in the tourism and hospitality sector. An additional cause of stress were the two major earthquakes that affected more than a quarter of the Croatian population (this topic is not specifically elaborated in interview responses). Additional risks related to working from home and digitalisation were mostly not recognised, although a significant number of respondents had noticed that working from home has resulted in a **less clear separation between work and private life**.

The majority of managers were not familiar with OSH legislation requirements. Therefore, the **legal services related to OSH are usually outsourced**. The majority of respondents consider that the number of psychosocial risks has not increased, but nevertheless COVID-19 is recognised as a new concern. There is a common agreement related to public awareness campaigns since none of the respondents were able to recall any such campaigns happening. The **work of labour inspectorates is formal**, and in the majority of cases is **focused on penalisation rather than education and support**. **Furthermore, psychosocial risks are not a focus** for inspectorates. While some companies are visited on an annual basis, some of have not been visited for 10+ years. In general, the work of inspectorates is assessed as **not supportive**.

In the majority of organisations, there is **no systematic OSH management**. Most efforts are directed towards **complying with legal requirements and avoiding potential financial penalties**. In companies that draft annual OSH reports, sections related to psychosocial risks and their management are usually non-existent. The **use of health and safety services is mostly related just to occupational health services**, again mostly in order to comply with legal requirements. Workplace risk assessment is mandatory in Croatia during job systematisation. While drafting the work positions and job descriptions (so-called 'systematisation'), the company must define the related risks for each position, but if job descriptions do not change, this is a one-time task for most companies.

All inputs suggest that OSH is considered just a legal requirement that has to be complied with in order to avoid penalties. With regard to psychosocial risk management, in the interviewed companies, the findings show that:

1. the most often identified risk management method is a **conversation with employees**;
2. despite the fact that they are prescribed by the legislation, trainings are either not organised at all or they are related only to OSH in general (that is, focus on physical risks) and they are available to a very limited number of employees;
3. the majority of respondents **did not consider psychosocial risk trainings as something potentially useful and beneficial** for them;
4. it is hard to define the effectiveness of procedures since in the majority of companies procedures do not exist, and **psychosocial risk management is implemented ad hoc when a problem has already occurred**;
5. **none of the interviewed organisations had an action plan to prevent work-related stress**;
6. only one out of 21 interviewed organisations had in place procedures related to bullying and harassment.

The type and extent of employee involvement depends on company size and the associated legal requirements. **All employees agreed that they can participate and give their contribution** in the definition of different risks, but it is clear that they are most often not related to psychosocial risks and their assessment and management. In the cases where employees are not included, it is their own decision since participation is not mandatory.

For the majority of respondents, the **main driver for any occupational risk management by the employers is to satisfy legal requirements** and the second driver is the satisfaction of employees. This is also true for the psychosocial risks; however, the practical management of those risks is rare. There are **no government or sectoral initiatives** that help organise/address psychosocial risk management at companies. The main barriers are related to the individuality of this topic (that is, it depends on the person) and insufficient expertise for its implementation. Since none of the companies interviewed had an action plan, **mitigation measures are also not defined and ad hoc solutions** are

a common manner for addressing the issue of psychosocial risks. Consequently, only a **limited number of companies are implementing risk management measures** (also only OSH in general). All interviewees agreed that there is **insufficient state support related to OSH**. For the majority of respondents, a solution would be **policy and legal regulation of this area accompanied by regular trainings and workshops** implemented by relevant state institutions.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. The Agency researches, develops, and distributes reliable, balanced, and impartial safety and health information and organises pan-European awareness raising campaigns. Set up by the European Union in 1994 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency brings together representatives from the European Commission, Member State governments, employers' and workers' organisations, as well as leading experts in each of the EU Member States and beyond.

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