

09/2009

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION



ETUCE FINAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHERS' Work Related Stress

Risk Assessment Systems, Inclusion of
Psychosocial Hazards in Social Dialogue
and Teacher Unions Health
& Safety Strategies

Athens, 5-6 October 2009



This activity has been carried out with the
financial support of the European Commission

Egalement disponible en français sous le titre :

“Conférence finale du CSEE sur le stress lié au travail chez les enseignants : Systèmes d'évaluation des risques, d'inclusion des risques psychosociaux dans le dialogue social et dans les stratégies des syndicats d'enseignants en matière de santé et de sécurité”

Reproduction of all or part of this publication is permitted without authorisation. However, accreditation to ETUCE must be made and copies must be sent to the ETUCE secretariat.

Published by the Trade Union Committee for Education - Brussels 2009

Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Welcome and opening session	5
1.2 Opening speech	5
2. Report on the two surveys on good practices in social dialogue and teacher unions' actions on psychosocial hazards linked to Work Related Stress	6
2.1 Collection of good practices on risk assessment of teachers' Work-Related Stress in schools	6
2.2 Collection of good practices in social dialogue and teacher unions' actions on psychosocial hazards linked to Work-Related Stress.....	7
3. Risk Assessment on work-related stress in schools – expectations towards teacher unions	8
4. Implementation of Risk Assessment in Schools based on the European Framework Directive on Health and Safety	9
4.1 Workplace Environment.....	9
4.2 Risk Assessment in Schools.....	10
5. Presentation of three good practices from the two surveys	11
5.1 Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Maltese example (1 st survey).....	11
5.2 Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Slovenian example (2 nd survey)	12
5.3 Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Estonian example (2 nd survey).....	12
6. Expert presentations on teachers' work-related stress	13
6.1 A Romanian Partnership to Create a Healthy and Safe School	13
6.2 Reducing the stressor noise at school	14
7. Working groups and plenary session	15
7.1 Working groups: Improving teacher union strategies and actions on H&S	15
7.2 Plenary Debate: Follow-up on the ETUCE Action Plan.....	17
8. Closing remarks	18
9. Annexes	19
Annex 1: Updated ETUCE action plan on teachers' work-related stress.....	19
Annex 2: Conference Agenda	23
Annex 3: List of participants	25
Annex 4: Acronyms	27

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome and opening session



Martin Rømer, ETUCE General Secretary, welcomed all participants and speakers to the conference. For the first time two representatives from the newly created European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) – Nanna Abildstrøm (Denmark) and Jenny Hambrook (United Kingdom) - were attending an ETUCE conference as speakers, and Mr. Rømer expressed his hopes for a good cooperation with the EFEE in the future.

As October 5th was World Teachers' Day, Mr. Rømer shortly commented that this should both be a day of celebration and an occasion to focus on some of the political problems facing teachers. Mr. Rømer introduced the objectives of the ETUCE project on teachers' work-related stress: to continue ETUCE's effort on work-related stress, and to put into practice the ETUCE Action Plan on work-related stress with the aim to implement the European Autonomous Framework Agreement on work-related stress.

At the final conference the results of the two questionnaires on work-related stress carried out in this project were presented. The participants discussed the ETUCE Working conditions and Health & Safety Network, and the implementation of the European Autonomous Agreement on Work-Related Stress in the education sector. In addition the ETUCE Action Plan on teachers' work-related stress was updated.

1.2 Opening speech

Mr. Themis Kotsifakis, OLME General Secretary, welcomed participants to Greece on behalf of the OLME Executive board. He thought the conference was indeed the best way to celebrate World Teachers Day - to think seriously about teachers' needs, problems and perspectives and to act accordingly. Mr. Kotsifakis pointed out that at present governments declare the importance of education for the future of our society. However at the same time the teaching profession is being denigrated and school teacher's professional status, social position and recognition are decreasing. School teachers are faced with problems related to financial policies and neoliberal educational policies and working conditions. According to Mr. Kotsifakis this creates an unbearable working environment and the development of work-related stress is an inevitable consequence.



School teachers are faced with problems related to financial policies and neoliberal educational policies and working conditions. According to Mr. Kotsifakis this creates an unbearable working environment and the development of work-related stress is an inevitable consequence.

In Greece educational reform is carried out without dialogue, and a new reform appears every time a new minister is put in office. This lack of dialogue and the creation of an unstable environment increases work-related stress and reduce teachers' work motivation. Currently research is being carried out on the consequences of the working conditions on schoolteachers' health.

2. Report on the two surveys on good practices in social dialogue and teacher unions' actions on psychosocial hazards linked to Work Related Stress

2.1 Collection of good practices on risk assessment of teachers' Work-Related Stress in schools



Ms. Monika Konczyk, Solidarnosc, Poland, member of the project Advisory Working Group, gave a presentation of the results of the first questionnaire produced in the project to collect good practices on risk assessment of teachers' Work-Related Stress in schools. She started her presentation with an introduction on the European Autonomous Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress (Directive 89/391/EEC), that underlines the obligation of the employer to perform risk assessment at the workplace. Risk assessment should be seen as a tool of risk management. Health & Safety (H&S) management enables the employer to effectively

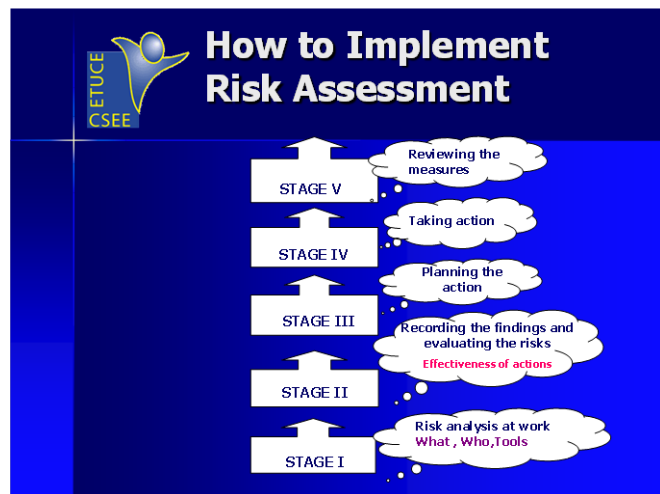
take measures for the protection of workers' safety and health.

Ms. Konczyk presented the 5 stages of implementation of risk assessment, and pointed to the importance of involvement of external expertise, school leadership involvement, and the consultation of workers and/or workers' representatives.

The main tool for collection of good practices was the electronic ETUCE Working Conditions and Health and Safety Network. In the survey a good practice was defined as:

- Involving one, several or all stages of implementation of risk assessment
- Relating to the use of external expertise, school leadership involvement or consultation of workers and/or workers' organisations
- Already being implemented at school level, and which the Teacher Unions (TU) considered worth sharing with colleagues across Europe.

The results of the collection of good practices showed that risk assessment including work-related stress seems to be new to many schools and teacher unions. Most examples were from primary and secondary schools and were mostly based on a written developed health and safety policy. Not all policies were implemented properly, and some were pilot projects. The majority of examples date from 2003 to 2009, so they are rather recent. 30% of examples concern risk assessment on all 5 stages, and 70% involve only some stages - stages 1, 2, and 4. The examples were equally distributed among examples on external expertise, involvement of school leadership and consultation of workers and workers' representatives.¹



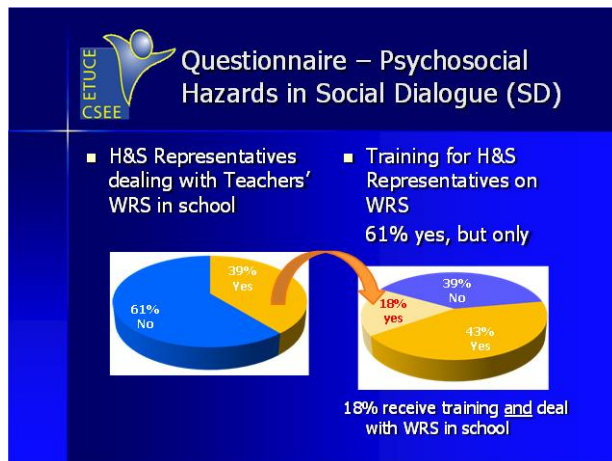
¹ For further elaboration on the good practices collected, see the following publication available on the ETUCE homepage: "ETUCE interim report on the project Teachers' work related stress: implementing the ETUCE Action Plan and the

2.2 Collection of good practices in social dialogue and teacher unions' actions on psychosocial hazards linked to Work-Related Stress

Ms. Anne Jenter, GEW, Germany, member of the project advisory working group, gave a presentation concerning the results of the second questionnaire produced in the project. This questionnaire dealt with good practices in social dialogue and teacher unions' actions on psychosocial hazards linked to work-related stress. The ETUCE secretariat received answers from 23 countries.



52% of respondents were dealing with work-related stress within the Education social dialogue. Only 17% of respondents had collective agreements dealing with teachers' work-related stress. 39% had other forms of agreements or social dialogue tools in place dealing with the issue. The survey hence makes clear that a lot still needs to be done in this field – both concerning the establishment and the implementation of collective or other agreements on teachers' work-related stress.



The questionnaire also dealt with health and safety representatives' training. 61% reported that health and safety representatives receive training on work-related stress, but only 18% both receive training, and deal with work-related stress in school. Concerning training of school head teachers on work-related stress, 65% reported that it was nonexistent, 35% reported that there was training, but that it only took place on an irregular basis.

Asked about difficulties in implementing measures on work-related stress,

respondents answered that national governments do not always accept to include work-related stress in labour legislation, that work-related stress is not considered an issue in education, that there is a lack of financial support by the government to perform Health & Safety tasks, and that there is a lack of time and difficulty to transform knowledge into action.

The questionnaire also touched the subject of union organisation concerning health and safety. 57% have only one person dealing with health and safety, 9% have a unit, 39% have a health and safety working group, and 13% have no representative dealing with health and safety.

Actions taken by teacher unions were mostly preventive. The returned questionnaires also provided a number of suggestions for future actions concerning work-related stress – on European, national and local level.²

European Autonomous Agreement on Work Related Stress". 06/2009(I), European Trade Union Committee for Education, Brussels: 2009.

² For further elaboration on the good practices collected, see the following publication available on the ETUCE homepage: "ETUCE second interim report on the project Teachers' work related stress: implementing the ETUCE Action Plan and the

3. Risk Assessment on work-related stress in schools – expectations towards teacher unions



Mr. Tim Tregenza, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), gave a presentation on work-related stress, risk management, and expectations towards teachers and teacher unions.

The 2007 Eurostat Labor Force Survey (LFS) showed that nearly 30% of workers were exposed to factors affecting their mental health. Especially in the education sector, the 4th European working conditions survey (published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions) found many workers suffering from symptoms associated with work-related stress.

Work-related stress is an organisational problem not an individual weakness. Therefore it has to be tackled at an organisational level. Furthermore it is a multi-causal problem that requires multi-dimensional solutions.

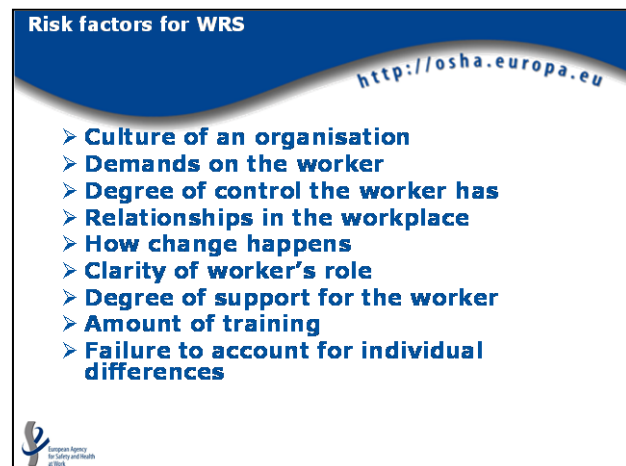
Some risk factors to look specifically for when doing risk assessment concerning work-related stress were presented on the slide on the right.

Mr. Tregenza informed the conference that EU-OSHA has information material on risk assessment available in 22 languages on their website (<http://osha.europa.eu>).

He talked about the duties concerning risk assessment. The Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage

improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (the “framework directive”) is clear on this matter - employers have the general duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work. Furthermore under health and safety law, all employers must carry out regular risk assessment. Workers and their representatives should be involved in the process, but the responsibility rests with the employer. Worker involvement is important in order to ensure that all staff-members are covered by the assessment – for example it is important to consider risk factors for part time teachers, teachers who leave the school site in connection with their work, and staff not directly employed by the school. Worker involvement is also important to ensure that all risk factors are addressed.

It is also important to identify solutions that will work – such as improving the work environment, improving the work organisation, and putting relevant policies in place. Solutions should not be top-down, but the result of cooperation, and work-related stress can only be approached in a consensual – not conflictive - manner.



European Autonomous Agreement on Work Related Stress". 06/2009(II), European Trade Union Committee for Education, Brussels: 2009.

Teachers and their representatives play an important role in monitoring the performance of control measures, encouraging the use of preventive systems, and in giving feedback to management. It is also important to support those who are suffering from work-related stress, to help in negotiations with management and finding solutions, and to take lessons learnt from individual cases and see if general changes are needed. Teacher unions can be leaders in the field by raising awareness among their members, and by providing training, practical information and support – particularly to worker safety representatives. Finally, unions play an important role in bringing health and safety into the mainstream education debate.

4. Implementation of Risk Assessment in Schools based on the European Framework Directive on Health and Safety

4.1 Workplace Environment

Nanna Abildstrøm, acting chair of the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) and chief negotiator of Local Government Denmark (LGDK), gave a presentation on the recent establishment of the EFEE, and on workplace environment in Denmark.

The EFEE was created in February 2009, which was a challenging task because it was difficult to identify the people in charge of education in the various countries.

EFEE has got members in 19 countries, but still does not have members in all EU countries. It also needs more members in higher education. For this purpose, ETUCE and EFEE have submitted a joint project application to the European Commission to continue work on employers' representativity. In spring 2009 EFEE passed agreements with ETUCE on a draft work programme and Rules of Procedure for the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education. On 30th September 2009 a joint application to create the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education (ESSDE) was sent to the European Commission. Early 2010 EFEE has planned representativity studies of its members, and the European Commission should then confirm the ESSDE. The first plenary meeting of the ESSDE is scheduled for 23rd of March 2010. Concrete topics that will be discussed in the committee are stress at the workplace, and violence and harassment in schools.

Ms. Abildstrøm proceeded to present some main points on working environment legislation and social dialogue in Denmark, where a close cooperation between employers' organizations and workers' unions exists concerning the working environment. The initiatives on the issue are described in the Danish working environment act and in a collective agreement on welfare and health. The work environment act stipulates that all organisations with more than 10 employees must set up an internal safety organisation. Furthermore sector working environment councils have been set up with members from employers' and employees' organisations. These councils provide inspiration, guidelines, and best practices to their sector. In Denmark risk assessment must be carried out by all workplaces (including schools) every third year.³



³ The Danish Labour Inspection has a homepage - www.at.dk – with information in English, German, Polish and Lithuanian.

The collective agreement on welfare and health was adopted in April 2008, and covers a variety of themes:

- Measurement of satisfaction and well-being
- Guidelines on health issues
- Presentation of the impact of the budget regarding labour and personnel matters
- Sick leave statistics
- Right to a sick call during long term sickness
- Guidelines for action plan when problems arise in the workplace assessment
- Guidelines regarding stress, violence and harassment

4.2 Risk Assessment in Schools



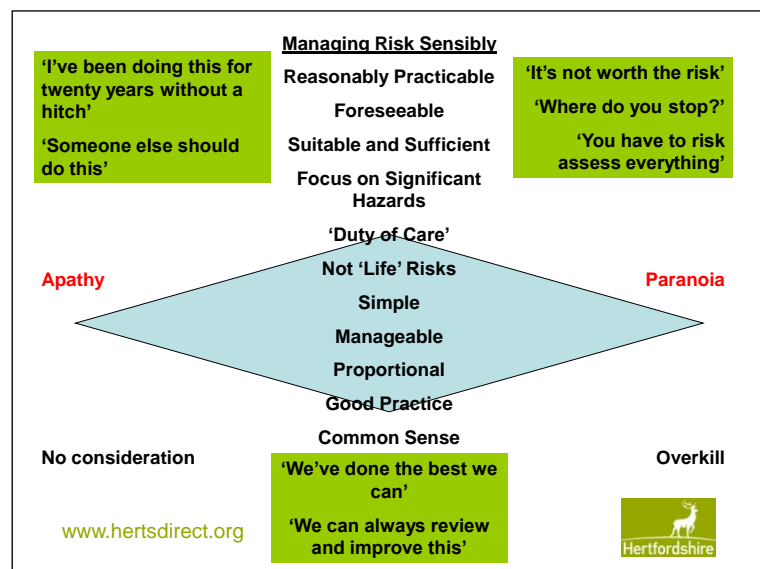
Jenny Hambrook, Head of Health & Safety, Hertfordshire County Council, United Kingdom, gave a presentation on her experience with risk assessment in schools.

She started her presentation by pointing out that leadership, both from teachers and management, is essential for risk assessment. The most essential principles in risk management are strong and active leadership from the top, worker involvement, assessment and review. On organisational level, minimising risks requires commitment and a positive culture.

Ms. Hambrook also underlined that risk assessment is not about bureaucracy, but about controlling significant risks.

Risks should be managed sensibly, finding a balance between lack of consideration and overkill consideration. This balance is illustrated in the chart below.

Ms. Hambrook also discussed how to define significant and insignificant risks. Some risks are potential risks for life (e.g. fire, using power tools and work-related stress). For these risks risk assessment is always required. Other risks might not be life threatening, but may need to be assessed depending on the context. Insignificant risks such as paper cuts that might lead to infection etc. are risks that do not need to be assessed. It is also important to remember that



all risks cannot be reduced to zero, but the aim is to reduce them as far as reasonably practical.

Ms. Hambrook finished her presentation by outlining two different approaches to risk assessment, both applied in the UK. One option is to follow the British Health and Safety Executive's management standards and do a traditional risk assessment. Another option is to follow the UK national Wellbeing programme, which has been developed specifically for

schools by the Teacher Support Network, and is broadly equivalent to the management standards. According to Ms. Hambrook the first approach often fosters a negative view, focusing on problems. Furthermore risk assessment is often viewed as something “we have to do to meet legal requirements” – it is not school owned. The Wellbeing programme however fosters a more positive and holistic approach by asking: what can we do to improve wellbeing? It is viewed as something everyone contributes to because it benefits them and the school.

5. Presentation of three good practices from the two surveys

5.1 Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Maltese example (1st survey)

Mr. Anthony Casaru, representative of the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) gave a presentation on the Maltese experience with “Health and Safety Teachers” in schools.

Mr. Casaru pointed out that the main weakness concerning Health and Safety in Malta was the lack of a Health and Safety culture. To change this situation, MUT has chosen to see education as a key to cultural change.



A number of initiatives have been taken:

- In 1998 an agreement was signed between the Government and Unions establishing Health and Safety Teachers in all state schools in Malta.
- In 1999 a central Health and Safety Unit for the education sector was set up.
- In 1999-2000 full coverage of Health and Safety Teachers in primary and secondary schools was

achieved.

Teachers gain the position of Health and Safety teacher through competitive interviews considering aptitude, suitability, qualifications, training and experience. Afterwards they are given relevant training to be able to fulfil their task. The role of a Health and Safety teacher is to instil good health and safety attitudes amongst staff and students in schools, and to render the premises as hazardless as possible, by e.g. organising school activities on Health and Safety, preparing the school for certification in Health and Safety standards, carrying out risk assessments, implementing control measures, contingency planning, and data collection. Mr. Casaru underlined that it is good to have a teacher performing risk assessments as he or she has essential internal knowledge of the risks at school.

The Health and Safety teacher scheme in schools has raised awareness amongst staff and students about the issue, and has led to a change of mentality. The working environment of teachers changed due to control measures being implemented to deal with various stressors. Still some challenges remain, such as reducing further the teaching load of Health and Safety Teachers to be able to perform their duties; continue extending the scheme to church schools, private schools, and further education; and to have *elected* Health and Safety Representatives in Schools.

5.2 Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Slovenian example (2nd survey)



Ms. Vlasta Sagadin, of ESTUS, Slovenia presented their work concerning teachers' work-related stress, which has been initialised due to the first ETUCE project on this topic. ESTUS needed reliable data of good quality to work on the issue and carried out an extensive survey with the help of an expert.

The results of the survey showed that stress is an everyday reality for Slovenian teachers, and that it needs to be dealt with at individual as well as at national level. 45.2 / 32.3 % of teachers participating in the survey reported to be strongly or exceptionally stressed. The majority of teachers assessed the profession as very or extremely stressful. School teachers

showed to be under more stress than kindergarten teachers, in worse psychological condition, more liable to burn out, less satisfied, have a lower assessment of self-effectiveness, and are more often considering leaving the profession.

In June 2009 ESTUS published a brochure with the survey results, and organised a press conference. The results have also been sent to the Ministry of Education to raise awareness on the issue.

Ms. Sagadin finished her presentation by underlining that ESTUS is engaged in all topics that affect their members – not only in traditional union values like working time and salaries. The study gave them a really good basis for further work on work-related stress.



5.3 Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Estonian example (2nd survey)

Ms. Evi Veesaar, International Secretary of the Estonian union EEPU, presented their work on teachers' work-related stress. Estonia is experiencing a serious shortage of teachers. Young people are not interested to become teachers, since teachers are overworked and underpaid in Estonia. A big task for teacher unions is therefore to get young people interested in the profession.

Stress is mainly caused by the intensive workload and working hours of teachers making up for the lack of colleagues.

EEPU has started organising in-service training on work-related stress, in combination with activities outside school – e.g. Spa-trips. The activities are carried out with joint funding from EEPU and school management – e.g. EEPU will pay the transport to go to the spa. EEPU organises all kinds of courses – even "laugh therapy" – the courses help teachers relax. The consequence of healthier teachers is the improved environment at school.



6. Expert presentations on teachers' work-related stress

Two expert speakers gave presentations on different aspects of teachers' work-related stress and risk assessment in schools.

6.1 A Romanian Partnership to Create a Healthy and Safe School

Mr. Constantin Baci, from Gheorghe Asachi Technical University, Iași, Romania, presented the project "*A Romanian Partnership to Create a Healthy and Safe School. Good for the school. Good for the students*" carried out by the Occupational Health and Safety Department at the Gheorghe Asachi Technical University, and the «Mihail Sturdza» secondary school in Iași, under the coordination of the local Labour Inspectorate. This partnership won the EU-OSHA Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Award in 2009. In this project a method for evaluation of occupational risks in schools, using a ten step evaluation guide, was developed.

The ten steps are:

1. Enlightening or changing the attitude of the school director towards risks
2. Asking for help from professional experts in occupational health and safety
3. Creating an internal evaluation team. At the «Mihail Sturdza» secondary school the team was composed of the director, the person in charge of health and safety, the school occupational physician, five representatives of the school administration, three representatives from the school union, and four students - one from each class.
4. Educating the internal working group on legal demands and norms; known dangers and risks; probability, frequency and duration of exposure to risks; measuring values and calculation of exposure to risks; and determination of the relation between the degree of exposure to a certain risk and its effects.
5. Using the evaluation guide for school risks to gather and quantify data on the existing risks at the school. The guide contains four sheets:
 - **Sheet 1:** Presentation of the beneficiary, establishment of distinct work-zones at the school, and description of activities taking place within them.
 - **Sheet 2:** Identification of the occupational risks specific for every work-zone.
 - **Sheet 3:** Estimation of the security/risk-level for every work-zone. (See chart on the following page for an example)
 - **Sheet 4:** Determining the security level for all the work-zones.

Nr. crt	IDENTIFICATION DES RISQUES	POINTS ACCORDÉS POUR LE NIVEAU DE SÉCURITÉ						Coefficient de pondération	Score réel	Score maximal possible	
		0	1	2	3	4	5				Non applicable
1	Est-ce que le plancher est en mauvais état (il y a des trous, des obstacles, de l'humidité)?							X	2,0	--	--
2	Est-ce que la taille de la chambre ne correspond pas au nombre de personnes (enseignants + élèves)?				X				1,5	4,5	7,5
3	Est-ce que le microclimat est insuffisant (la température, l'humidité, la circulation de l'air)?					X			1,0	4,0	5,0
4	Est-ce que la chambre est mal éclairée avec de la lumière naturelle et artificielle?				X				1,5	4,5	7,5
5	Est-ce qu'il y a du bruit qui perturbe l'attention et la communication verbale?		X						2,0	2,0	10,0
6	Est-ce que le mobilier est mal conçu et génère des positions inconfortables (non ergonomiques)?			X					2,0	4,0	10,0
7	Lorsque les élèves sont en face des fenêtres ouvertes, est-ce qu'ils sont susceptibles de tomber à l'extérieur?	X							0,5	0,5	5,0
8	Est-ce que les élèves ont des chaussures inadéquates (humides, sales, avec des semelles glissantes etc.)?				X				1,0	3,0	5,0
9	Est-ce que les élèves ont l'habitude de jeter des objets d'un collègue à l'autre?					X			1,5	4,5	5,0
10	Est-ce qu'il y a des actes de violence verbale et / ou physique (enseignant - élève, élève - élève, élève - personne étrangère etc.)?			X					1,0	2,0	5,0
Score total									29,0	60,0	

$$N_{s\ F\ 3-1} = \frac{29}{60} \times 100 = 48,33\%$$

6. Evaluation of occupational risks - assessing the security level of each work zone.
 7. Preparing an evaluation report and a prevention and protection plan.
 8. Participation of students. Students were very active and could identify risks that only they were aware of. The students even made small films and took photos documenting different risks.
 9. Re-evaluation of risks, to identify new risks and remove those risks from the plan that have been eliminated.
 10. Promotion of the idea to other institutions.
- The model has now been implemented in several schools in Romania.

6.2 Reducing the stressor noise at school

Mr. Gerhart Tiesler, University of Bremen, Institute of Interdisciplinary School Research, gave a presentation on his research in the acoustic ergonomics of schools. Mr. Tiesler began his presentation by underlining that teaching reality is very complex. To describe this reality, perspectives from pedagogy, occupational medicine and building physics must all be included. Mr. Tiesler based his presentation on two examples from his research - "the field school" and "the laboratory school", and presented results concerning:



Room Acoustics: In the field school the research team found there was a great difference in acoustics between the first and second floor classrooms. In the laboratory school the research team intervened and changed the acoustic conditions by refurbishing a classroom - building an acoustic ceiling and putting in acoustic absorbers.

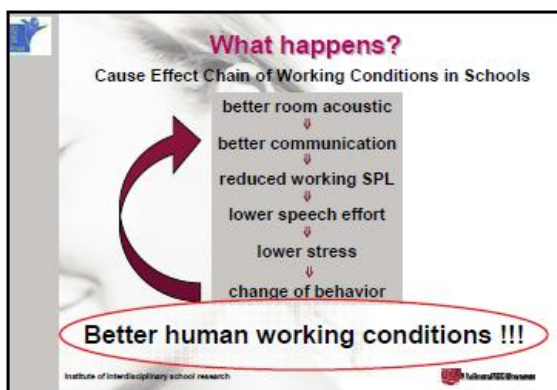
Room Acoustics & Sound Pressure Level: After the refurbishment of the classroom at the laboratory school it was remarkably more silent. The research team also found that speech intelligibility was better in the second floor classrooms at the field school.

Room Acoustics, Sound Pressure Level & Pedagogies: The research team also looked into the connection between room acoustics, sound pressure level and the use of either teacher-centred teaching methods or student-centred teaching methods. In the laboratory school the team found that before the refurbishment of the classroom, student-centred teaching created more noise than teacher-centred teaching. After the refurbishment however student-centred teaching showed to be more silent than teacher-centred teaching. The team also found that ventilation helps reduce noise as the students experience less fatigue when classrooms are better ventilated.

Room Acoustics, Sound Pressure Level, Pedagogies & Workload: The research team also looked at the heart rate of teachers and students to measure their workload reaction in different environments. They found that the teachers' heart rate lowered after the refurbishment in the laboratory school. This shows that noise is an elementary stressor and should be reduced in order to reduce work-related stress of teachers. Also stress-reactions

among students were measured to be higher when there was a lack of ventilation - underlining the importance of this aspect.

All in all Mr. Tiesler's presentation showed how physical aspects of the school environment such as acoustics and ventilation can contribute to teachers' work-related stress.⁴ He ended his presentation with this illustration of a cause and effect chain of working conditions in schools.



7. Working groups and plenary session

7.1 Working groups: Improving teacher union strategies and actions on H&S

The themes for discussion in working groups were shortly introduced by Mr. Anders Eklund, Lärarförbundet, Sweden, and Project Advisory Working Group Member. The presentation focussed on how teacher unions can help to promote stress reduction at work.



Mr. Eklund presented three steps for teacher unions to take:

⁴ A publication of the research results is available in English: M. Oberdörster, G. Tiesler: *Acoustic ergonomics of school*. 1. Edition. Bremerhaven: Wirtschaftsverlag NW Verlag für neue Wissenschaft GmbH 2006. (Schriftenreihe der Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin: Forschungsbericht, Fb 1071), ISBN: 3-86509-513-5, 196 pages.

1. *Analyse the situation* – find and concentrate on the main problem and ask what the consequences are.
2. *Find a strategy* - decide on your teacher union’s targets in the fields of promotion, prevention and rehabilitation – considering different levels (individual, group, organisation – see chart on the left) – go beyond rehabilitation of individuals.

ETUCE Final Conference on Teachers’ Work-Related Stress

Strategy
Decide on your teacher union’s targets in the fields of promotion, prevention and rehabilitation

	Individual	Group School	Organization Employer State
Promotion			
Prevention			
Rehabilitation			

3. *Act* - Act according to your strategy which relies on the analysis your union has made. Do not simply copy other actions, but let them inspire your union in finding the appropriate actions for your case.

Reports from the working groups to the plenary

Causes of and problems relating to work-related stress

In all three working groups the causes of, and problems relating to work-related stress were discussed. These include overcrowded classrooms, violent students, uneven workload, lack of respect for the teaching profession, shortage of teachers, teaching misbehaving students and students with special needs without proper support and back-up, isolation of teachers, inter-colleague competition, and many more.



Union strategies

Many different union strategies on how to deal with work-related stress were discussed and presented.

Though all the strategies varied very much depending on the national context and the obstacles teacher unions face when addressing the topic⁵, member organisations used the working groups to exchange good practices and to learn from other organisations.

The union initiatives and strategies mentioned were very diverse. On a general level they involve:

- Dialogue with school management, parents and students.
- Dialogue with local authorities
- Dialogue with and proposals to ministries of education (and other ministries)
- Surveys and questionnaires to map the extent of work-related stress

⁵ For example in Italy it is a big problem that stress is considered to be a mental disorder. Teachers are not allowed to teach if they have mental disorders, and this means that teachers do not talk about stress because they are afraid to lose their jobs.

- Collection of measures to fight work-related stress
- Health and Safety trainings for teachers, Health and Safety committees, and school management.
- Teacher hotline and psychological counselling.
- Negotiating for a free spa vacation for teachers
- Information and dissemination via: publication of brochures and booklets; health information days and seminars on noise, stress, violence, bullying, communication, and conflict resolution; setting up stress prevention groups.

Suggestions for discussions in Sectoral Social Dialogue at European level



Finally the priorities concerning work-related stress in the sectoral social dialogue at European level were discussed, and two suggestions were made:

- Aggressive student behaviour seems to be a growing problem in most countries, and is a stress-factor for teachers. This would be an important topic to discuss at European level.
- Increasing class sizes are also a growing problem, and therefore discussion of a European limit was suggested.

7.2 Plenary Debate: Follow-up on the ETUCE Action Plan

The final point on the conference agenda was a plenary debate on actions to take in the future concerning teachers' work-related stress. The debate was chaired by Kounka Damianova, SEB, Bulgaria and ETUCE Vice-president, with the assistance of Anders Eklund, Lärarförbundet, Sweden and Project Advisory Working Group member, and Susan Flocken from the ETUCE secretariat. The debate concentrated on three questions: The role of the ETUCE network on Health and Safety; update and follow-up of the ETUCE Action Plan on teachers' work-related stress; possible development of a broader ETUCE policy paper concerning teachers' work-related stress?

Concerning the future of the ETUCE network on Health and Safety the opinion was expressed that it should be used to strengthen the ETUCE position in social dialogue at European level. The network should continue to be a source of information on Health and Safety measures to take at school level, and gather and present good suggestions on Health and Safety and risk assessment, to be brought forward in dialogue with employers. Apart from information the network should also continue to make research accessible that documents the problems with teachers' work-related stress.

Network participation was also discussed. The network offers a forum on Health and Safety issues where you can contact other teacher unionists dealing with Health and Safety. This helps to exchange good ideas and practices, so when you are in need of specific information you can contact other member organisations. Nevertheless participation in the network has been low and the proposal was made to develop a Health and Safety webpage instead. The

ETUCE secretariat will look into the possibilities of setting up a new structure for the network.

The development of a broader policy paper concerning teachers' work-related stress on a higher level including discussions on restructuring of the education system and philosophies of education was discussed, but not considered a top priority at the moment

The ETUCE Action Plan on teachers' work related stress was also discussed and a few amendments were suggested. The updated version of the Action Plan can be found in annex 1 in this report.

8. Closing remarks

Ms. Kounka Damianova closed the conference by thanking the participants for their contributions. It seemed that participants' expectations towards the conference had been met as the conference gave the opportunity to exchange opinions and good practices, and collect data to take home. She also thanked the project Advisory Working Group for their work on the project, and the Greek colleagues for taking care of the conference arrangements.

9. Annexes

Annex 1: Updated ETUCE action plan on teachers' work-related stress

This action plan was originally an outcome of the first ETUCE project on teachers' work-related stress (2007). After the implementation of the second ETUCE project on teachers' work-related stress (2009) the action plan has been updated with some minor changes, drawing on the knowledge gained in this second project.

ETUCE believes a school should be a safe, healthy and propitious place for teaching and learning. Schools are the workplace of teachers, but first and foremost they are educational institutions for young students. Stress can thus be harmful not only for the workforce (teachers and other staff in education), but can indirectly harm the pupils and put at risk the quality and efficiency of the education provided.

The challenge of preventing and tackling work-related stress is consequently an issue for employers in education. There is furthermore a legal obligation for employers, under the European and national laws, to take action on stress, and in particular the necessary steps for a suitable risk assessment at the workplace. This risk assessment is the most appropriate process for managing work-related stress, aiming at identifying the hazards at the workplace as well as who can be harmed, and how, before taking the appropriate actions to prevent, reduce and eliminate stress amongst teachers.

Within its projects on teachers' work-related stress, ETUCE has carried out several studies to gather information on how teacher trade unions in Europe deal with this issue. The first ETUCE survey showed that 14 out of the 27 (EU and EFTA) countries that answered the survey questionnaire have a specific risk assessment system on work-related stress, while only around 25 % of the same countries have implemented it at school level. Another ETUCE survey, focussing on collection of good practices of risk assessment including work-related stress at school level, equally showed that risk assessment in schools and particularly the inclusion of psychosocial hazards is only at its beginning.

The first ETUCE survey established that the most important stressors for teachers are related to the organisation of the work and to the working conditions and working environment at school. It is therefore worth emphasising that stress is a symptom of organisational problems and not a separate workers' weakness. Stress finds its roots in the way teaching and the school as a whole are organised. Physical aspects of the school environment, such as noise and poor ventilation, can also cause stress and should not be neglected.

It is also important to underline the relevance of implementing the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on work-related stress at national level. National trade unions should use all the existing policy and legal documents on the issue to draw the attention of the public, and especially of employers, to the action needed in that field. Although almost 70% of the 27 countries which participated in the first ETUCE survey are aware of the existence

of the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on work-related stress, only around 40% of them have taken steps to implement it at national level.

When it comes to influencing employers and legislators to act on work-related stress, teacher unions face different challenges. A third ETUCE survey has shown that in some, mostly the Nordic, countries the main challenge identified by teacher trade unions is to apply and implement existing legislation in practice. In other countries psychosocial risks and hazards are not even recognized, and are not integrated in national health and safety legislation. The national situations of teacher unions differ, and appropriate national actions will therefore also differ.

Teacher unions are increasingly active in preventative measures concerning work-related stress. According to the third ETUCE survey 61% replied that their union organised training on work-related stress for Health & Safety representatives. Meanwhile teacher unions also have limited human resources dealing with health and safety issues. In the same survey 57% replied that their union has only one person dealing with health and safety issues, and 13% remain without anyone in their union responsible for the area. Consequently the need for further progress on the issue of work-related stress remains. ETUCE supports its member organisations to continue the work achieved so far.

As the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on work-related stress has an intersectoral approach, a preliminary sector-wise interpretation is needed regarding the education sector and its specific features. As part of its first project, ETUCE has produced an interpretation guide from a teachers' perspective, and continues to promote it as a useful tool for teacher trade unions when implementing it at national, regional and local levels.

As regards the above-mentioned elements, the results of the ETUCE studies on teachers' work-related stress and the ETUCE interpretation guide of the European social partners Framework Agreement on work-related stress, three main levels for specific actions have been identified:

1. European level
2. National teacher trade unions level
3. School level

At European level, ETUCE commits itself to:

- Continue supporting the implementation of the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on work-related stress at national and trade union levels;
- Support the exchange of national good practices from the implementation of the Framework Agreement in the education sector and to disseminate these amongst its member organisations;
- Report to ETUC on how the national implementation of the Framework Agreement is carried out, according to the information sent by its member organisations;

- Monitor and influence the EU decision-making processes, particularly the European Commission's Strategy on Health and Safety at Work (5-year strategic guidelines documents) and related policies and legislative measures, so as to give greater prominence to work-related stress in the European agenda;
- Continue lobbying the EU Commission's DG EAC and the Education Council to deal with teachers' Health and Safety issues within the "Education and Training 2020" Process;
- Maintain the discussion on the issue of work-related stress for teachers within the ETUCE Working Conditions and Health & Safety Network;
- Seek funds for a large-scale study on the causes for stress amongst teachers in the EU and EFTA countries in cooperation with the employers in education, taking into account the gender perspective;
- Negotiate specific and joint guidelines with employers in education at European level on how to implement the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement.

At national teacher trade union level

➤ **ETUCE commits itself to:**

- Retain the acquired knowledge and experiences from its teachers' work-related stress projects by continuing to gather national good practices and by updating and disseminating the interpretation guide to the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on work-related stress;
- Support its member organisations in their efforts to improve national policies and national legislations on occupational health and safety and particularly on stress at work;
- Support its member organisations in developing national trade union strategies and on how to ensure a good working environment and well-being at school for teachers and pupils.

➤ **ETUCE advises national trade unions to:**

- Continue informing and raising awareness about teachers' work-related stress risks, especially about the implications of the failure to act, and to lobby national governments, local authorities and other employers in education on the need for action to tackle stress at work;
- Negotiate specific and joint guidelines with employers in education at national level on how to implement the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement;
- Work on the adoption of specific collective agreements in countries where the national collective bargaining model allows, or to work on the inclusion of the issue of work-related stress in general collective agreements when the latter ones are renewed;
- Provide advice and guidance on efficient measures and tools - for school management and school staff - on how to tackle and prevent work-related stress, by giving priority to examples of measures taking part of the risk assessment process;
- Disseminate this guidance to their regional, local and if possible school trade union structures;

- Promote training measures for teachers, Health & Safety Committees, and head teachers on how to prevent and tackle work-related stress.
- Work on the inclusion of work-related stress in the context of teachers' continuous professional education

At school level, ETUCE advises national trade unions to:

- Concentrate efforts on incentive measures to promote the implementation of risk assessment in schools;
- Emphasise the importance of involving school management in the process of tackling work-related stress for teachers, always in consultation with the workforce;
- Promote the balance model - balance between demands and resources for teachers in schools - amongst school leadership and workers;
- Promote the use of work-oriented preventive measures when dealing with stress, or to combine work- and worker-oriented measures in schools;
- Promote the use of external expertise, e.g. trainings, mediations, surveys, psychologists, when needed.

Annex 2: Conference Agenda

AGENDA

ETUCE FINAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHERS' Work Related Stress

Risk Assessment Systems, Inclusion of Psychosocial Hazards in Social Dialogue and Teacher Unions Health & Safety Strategies

Hotel Athens Imperial, Athens
5-6 October 2009

Sunday, 4 October 2009

16.30 - 19.30 Optional guided historic tour organised by OLME

Monday, 5 October 2009

10:00 – 10:30 *Registration*

10:30– 10:50 **Welcome and opening session:
Performance of the ETUCE Network on Working Conditions
and Health and Safety.**
By Martin Rømer, ETUCE General Secretary

10:50 – 11:00 **Opening speech**
By Themis Kotsifakis, OLME General Secretary

11:00 – 11:30 **Report on the two surveys on good practices in social
dialogue and teacher unions' actions on psychosocial hazards
linked to Work Related Stress**
By Monika Konczyk and Anne Jenter, Project Advisory Working Group
Members

11:30 – 12:15 **Risk Assessment on WRS in schools – expectations towards
teacher unions**
By Tim Tregenza, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

12:15- 13:00 **Implementation of Risk Assessment in Schools based on the
European Framework Directive on Health and Safety**
By Nanna Abildstrøm & Jenny Hambrook, European Federation of
Education Employers.

13:00 – 14:30 *Lunch*

Presentation of three good practices from the two surveys

14:30 – 14:50 **Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Maltese example
(1st survey)**
By, Antony Casaru, MUT

14:50 – 15:10 ***Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Slovenian example (2nd survey)***
By, Vlasta Sagadin, ESTUS

15:10 – 15:30 ***Work-related stress in social dialogue: the Estonian example (2nd survey)***
By, Evi Veesaar, EEPU

15:30 – 17:00 ***Working groups: Improving teacher union strategies and actions on H&S***
Short introduction by Anders Eklund, Project Advisory Working Group Member

17:00 – 17:30 ***Reports from the working groups to the plenary session***

19:00 *Dinner*

Tuesday, 6 October 2009

09:30 – 10:00 ***A Romanian Partnership to Create a Healthy and Safe School***
By Constantin Baci, Gheorghe Asachi Technical University, Iasi

10:00 – 10:30 ***Reducing the stressor noise at school***
By Dr. Gerhart Tiesler, University of Bremen

10:30 – 12:00 ***Working groups: Follow-up on the ETUCE Action Plan***

12:00 – 12:45 ***Reports from the working groups to the plenary session***

12:45 – 13:00 ***Closing remarks***
By Martin Rømer, ETUCE General Secretary

13:00 – 14:30 *Lunch*

Annex 3: List of participants

Country	Organisation	Name	First name
Bulgaria	PODKREPA	Petrov	Julian
Bulgaria	PODKREPA	Nalbantova	Elena
Bulgaria	SEB	Takeva	Janka
Bulgaria	SEB	Damianova	Kounka
Cyprus	OELMEK	Samaras	Paraskevas
Cyprus	OLTEK	Constandinos	Georgiou
Cyprus	KTOS	Elcil	Sener
Cyprus	KTOEÖS	Yaman	Ali
Cyprus	KTOEÖS	Narınçlı	Savaş
Cyprus	POED	Louca	Andreas
Cyprus	POED	Micellidis	Dimitri
Czech Republic	CMOS-PS	Pleajova	Milada
Czech Republic	KOK	Mikes	Antonin
Denmark	DLF	Øst Vejbaek	Merete
Denmark	DLF	Grove	Susanne
Denmark	GL	Hjortlund	Niels
Estonia	EEPU	Veesaar	Evi
France	SNES/FSU	Labaye	Elisabeth
France	FERC	Fasoli	Solange
Germany	GEW	Reiss	Susanne
Germany	GEW	Triebe	Manfred
Germany	VBE	Rüger	Hildegund
Germany	BLBS	Kraft	Knut
Greece	OLME	Kotsifakis	Themis
Greece	OLME	Haramis	Pavlos
Greece	OLME	Glarentzou	Eleni
Greece	OLME	Skikos	Nikos
Greece	OLME	Margarita	Antoniou
Hungary	SEH	Gallo	Piroska
Hungary	SEH	Vajna	Tunde
Hungary	PDSZ	Kerpen	Gábor
Ireland	INTO	Máire	Ní Chúinneagáin
Ireland	ASTI	King	Patrick
Italy	UIL-SCUOLA	Sciandrone	Francesco
Italy	UIL-SCUOLA	Macro	Fiorello Michele
Italy	CISL-SCUOLA	Dal Pino	Maria Lucia
Lithuania	Christian trade union of education workers	Alekniene	Grazina
Malta	MUT	Casaru	Anthony
Norway	Utdanningsforbundet	Kolstad	Lasse
Netherlands	CNV Onderwijs	Huisman	Francis
Poland	SKOiw NSZZ Solidarnosc	Kubowicz	Stefan
Poland	KSN NSZZ Slodarność	Żelazina	Eva
Poland	ZNP	Siecinska	Joanna
Portugal	FENPROF	Mendoça	Manuela
Portugal	FNE	Bragança	Maria Arminda
Romania	FNS ALMA MATER	Grigoras	Stefan

Romania	FNS ALMA MATER	Aelxandrescu	Daniela Cristiana
Slovakia	ZPŠaV NKOS	Briganová	Mária
Slovakia	ZPŠaV NKOS	Martinák	Milan
Slovakia	OZPSaV	Ondek	Pavel
Slovakia	OZPSaV	Mlcousek	Michal
Slovenia	ESTUS	Modrijan	Sandi
Slovenia	ESTUS	Vlasta	Sagadin
Spain	CSIF (CSI-CSIF)	Paredes Sánchez	Antonia
Spain	CSIF (CSI-CSIF)	Moreno Buriel	Eliseo
Spain	FETE UGT	Asensio	Lydia
Spain	FECCOO	Gómez Quiñones	M ^a Concepción
UK	SSTA- Scotland	Daziel	Fiona
UK	NASUWT	Chapman	Julian
UK	NASUWT	Quigley	Jim
UK	UTU	Reid	Jacquie
UK	UTU	Hall-Callaghan	Avail
Speakers			
Spain	EU-OSHA	Trogenza	Tim
Denmark	EFEE	Ablidstrøm	Nanna
UK	EFEE	Hambrook	Jenny
Romania	Gheorghe Asachi Technical University	Baciu	Constantin
Germany	Universität Bremen	Tiesler	Gerhart
Advisory Working Group			
Sweden	Läerarförbundet	Eklund	Anders
Germany	GEW	Jenter	Anne
Poland	Solidarnosc	Konczyk	Monika
Interpreters			
Belgium		Herzet	Dominique
Belgium		Cauchie-De Keyster	Charlotte
Staff			
Belgium	ETUCE	Rømer	Martin
Belgium	ETUCE	Verschueren	Danielle
Belgium	ETUCE	Flocken	Susan
Belgium	ETUCE	Hansen	Agnete

Annex 4: Acronyms

DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
EEMU	Estonian Educational Personnel Union
EFEE	European Federation of Education Employers
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ESSDE	European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education
ESTUS	Education and Science Trade Union of Slovenia
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
EU	European Union
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft
H & S	Health and Safety
LFS	Eurostat Labor Force Survey
LGDK	Local Government Denmark
MUT	Malta Union of Teachers
OLME	Federation of Secondary School Teachers of Greece
SEB	Syndicat des Enseignants Bulgares
TU	Teacher Union
WRS	Work-related stress



**European Trade Union Committee for Education
Comité syndical européen de l'éducation**

Bd du Roi Albert II, 5 – 9th Floor
B-1210 Bruxelles, Belgique

T + 32 2 224 06 91/2

F + 32 2 224 06 94

secretariat@csee-etuice.org

www.csee-etuice.org