

# REPORT

NOVEMBER 2011 ISSUE 1

## Who are the EWHN?

The European Work Hazards Network is a unique international forum uniting activists with different experience, skills and backgrounds – workers, labour representatives, scientists and occupational safety and health professionals committed to improving safety, health and welfare in the work environment. It is a permanent Europe-wide network with many participating national organisations and networks. We welcome and hope to support increased participation by individuals, groups and nations not already involved.

Keep in touch with us through our website: [www.ewhn.eu](http://www.ewhn.eu)

## 13th EWHN Conference Turin, Italy, 5-7 October 2012

Full programme and booking details will follow but workplace visits have been proposed to car, trucks, tyres, boat, wine, chocolate and cosmetics manufacturers as well as to construction sites and a local hospital. Workshops are being organised on occupational cancer, the effectiveness of risk assessment, migrant workers, stress in the workplace etc. Speakers have been invited from Turin, the EU and around the world.

We hope to see you there.



## CANCER AT WORK



### Guest speakers at the September EWHN Steering Group meeting in Turin laid out their concerns about cancers caused by work and discussed the topic with participants.

Benedetto Terracini, from Italy, gave an overview of carcinogenic properties of chemicals in the workplace and discussed the limits of epidemiological studies.

Simon Pickvance, an occupational health and cancer campaigner from Sheffield, UK looked at occupational bladder cancers and how failing to recognise the occupational link to many was not only limiting our recognition of this but also other work-related cancers.

Stefano Silvestre, from Italy, discussed nasal cancers.

Thora Brendstrup, from AAA

in Denmark, looked at a study of a cluster of cancers of the liver/gall bladder duct in a Danish waste water plant.

Henning Wriedt, from Arbeit & Gesundheit in Germany, discussed new regulatory approaches to prevention of occupational cancers and boosting minimisation of exposure.

Aida Ponce del Castillo, of the ETUI, discussed current ETUI activity in relation to REACH and challenges for the future.

The seminar recognised that occupational cancer is an intensely political area, with the role of employers, and those with vested interests in the continued exposure of workers to carcinogens, clear at every level.

Simon Pickvance said: “The relatively low priority given to cancer, a major cause of deaths due to work, has to be changed along with the acceptability of cancer risks at work. The idea that cancer risks are things of the past and that there is little connection between illness now and current risks must also be challenged.”

The seminar recognised that occupational cancer is an example of inequalities of protection within and between member states with women and unskilled blue collar workers at particular risk. However, it also recognised levels of enforcement and of trade union activity are declining in many member states.

A more detailed report of the discussion is available from:

[www.ewhn.eu](http://www.ewhn.eu)

## Going global?

Maintaining and expanding good international contacts outside the European Union is a primary objective of the EWHN and we are committed to increasing joint international work and campaigning.

We have been successful in developing good links with groups such as the Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV); the Japan Occupational Safety and Health Resource Center (JOSHRC); the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (NCOSH) in the USA. As well as the groups we have had good contact with their member organisations.

We also have contact with organisations big and small around the globe, notably in Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico.

There's still some considerable work to do in establishing links within the EU, non-EU Countries, Africa, South America and Russia.

Hopefully, in securing future funding we can continue those contacts we have and extend our reach to others we haven't met as yet.



# Stress Busting

**It has been agreed to hold a seminar on occupational stress at the next Steering Group meeting to be held in March 2013 when the venue has been agreed.**

The success of the seminar on occupational cancer at the Steering Group meeting in Turin, September 2011, was felt to be a good basis for future meetings as it combined network business with an opportunity to debate a common issue - and work related stress was a clear leader for the next debate.

Campaigners have been fighting to get occupational stress debated, recognised and controlled for many years. The pressures of globalisation from the 80's onwards with outsourcing, privatisation, lay-offs, speed-up, presenteeism in the west and an industrial revolution in the east saw a massive increase in stress. The global financial crisis has made it even worse, certainly in Europe.

The seminar will be an opportunity to compare what progress has been made and where, any retrograde steps and where action is necessary. Current expert and worker views will be presented as well as strategies for achieving positive change.

Notice of the seminar will be sent out well in advance of the event. Keep watching the EWHN web site for updates. [www.ewhn.eu](http://www.ewhn.eu)



## FINAL STATEMENT FROM THE 2010 EWHN CONFERENCE

Following a weekend of presentations, workshops, information meetings, workplace visits, debate and discussion at the 2010 EWHN Conference in Leeds, delegates voted unanimously to say:

We leave this conference pledging to work individually and collectively to:

- ◆ Resist attempts to weaken laws and agreements which protect workers; and take and support action to strengthen laws and agreements;
- ◆ Resist moves to reduce enforcement action through cuts or political pressure; and take and support action to strengthen enforcement;
- ◆ Take and support action to increase protection for vulnerable workers;
- ◆ Promote and organise for more and better regulation of markets and increased accountability of companies and individual directors;
- ◆ Take and support action to develop 'good work': work that is safe, meaningful, socially just and sustainable; work that enables workers to develop skills and knowledge and have a reasonable life/work balance; work where people are treated with dignity and respect;
- ◆ Develop solidarity with working people throughout the world to resist the transfer of risk from one country to another, with a major goal being a global ban on asbestos; work to develop an active global network of health and safety activists;
- ◆ Take and support action aimed at reducing inequalities within and between nations: equal rights for all – men and women, all races and people of all beliefs.



## 2010 EWHN Conference

From 10-12 September, 2010, 190 health and safety activists from 16 countries across the world gathered together in Leeds University, England, for the biennial European Work Hazards Conference. In addition to delegates from across the European Union, participants to this 12th EWHN conference had travelled from China, Korea, India, South Africa, Mexico and USA. The conference brought together workers, labour representatives, health and safety representatives, scientists and occupational health and safety professionals.

They met to exchange knowledge and experiences; to explore the impact of the global recession on work environments and occupational health and safety; and to strengthen collective international campaigning for better working conditions in Europe and throughout the world.

A pdf of the report of the 2010 EWHN Conference can be downloaded here: [www.ewhn.eu](http://www.ewhn.eu)

## EWHN as an NGO

The EWHN is progressing towards formally establishing itself as an NGO in the hope of making fundraising for future activities more likely.

There has been considerable debate about this move within the network. However, a move in this direction was felt to be the best way for the network to access funding which would allow EWHN to extend its work and to enable wider participation by health and safety activists from across the world.

Therefore, on 30 September 2011 the EWHN Steering Group met with a lawyer to formally and legally register EWHN as a recognised association, a necessary step toward becoming a European NGO.

## EWHN member network contact details

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Next Conference: Turin October 5th - 7th 2012  
Next Steering Group meeting  
March 9th - 11th 2012, venue to be decided

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