

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE METHODOLOGY USED TO NOTIFY OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

The production of accident statistics in the European Union (EU) countries is based upon 21 variables, which follow a harmonized methodology proposed by the Eurostat. These encompass two distinctive sets: 13 are classical variables, whereas 8 are new additions implemented in 2001. These 8 new variables are the main focus of this study, which objective is to collect each EU country's notification form (if there is one), and compare them in terms of content (*i.e.*, the variables that are present) and format (how the information is assessed), as well as to propose a different format for the Portuguese Notification Form, still in use.

Consequently, the notification process of occupational accidents within the EU was assessed through a comparative analysis, achieved using 2 structured analysis grids, especially designed for this effect. Of the 27 countries which comprise the EU at the present time, only 18 were entered into the analysis pool due to clerical difficulties. Ergo, of the 18 participant countries only one, the Netherlands, did not use a notification form; instead the reports are made by telephone, which may be followed by a thorough onsite investigation.

It was concluded that all 18 countries analysed at this stage are within (many even beyond) the minimum of 4 new variables established in 2001, with the apparent exception of Greece (to be confirmed at a later stage). Of these variables, the top 4 were: Deviation, Contact - Mode of Injury, Working Environment, and Specific Physical Activity; for all 8 variables, the most used format was the "specific field for the variable"; and the terminology most frequently used was "similar to ESAW".

The format proposed for the Portuguese Notification Form was inspired on Bulgaria's and United Kingdom's notification forms, since these appear to have good balance between detail and a friendly (to fill in) structure.