

IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN UNION OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY DIRECTIVES INTO LITHUANIAN LAW

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NATIONAL APPROACH CONCERNING THE HARMONISATION PROCESS

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE *ACQUIS*

Lithuania signed a Europe (Associated) Agreement on June 12, 1995 with the European Union and lodged an official request for a European Union membership. In 1997 the process of the ratification of this Agreement was completed. Even though the Agreement came into force from February 1, 1998, the preparation to implement its provision was started in 1997. According to this Agreement, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour accepted handling to create proper social security system; to harmonize the laws of Lithuania with European Union requirements in the sphere of protection of employees, including health and safety at work.

Harmonization of legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania was effected by unifying them to the requirements of the European Union law since 1997. Special attention was focused on those European Union legal standards, which are mentioned in the White Paper and where included in the National Law Harmonization Programme. In the sphere of social security and labour, legal acts on occupational health and safety at work are among the most important.

On 31 May 1999, the Governmental European Integration Commission approved a newly structured Lithuania's European Union Accession Programme (the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (LEUAP-NPAA)). Since then, this Programme has become the key document in the planning and management of preparation for Lithuania's membership in the European Union. The Programme has been integrated into the strategic management and budget planning systems of the Government. The structure of the Programme received a positive evaluation in the European Commission's Regular Report 1999.

In the beginning of 2000 in accordance with its agenda, the Government of Lithuania drafted an updated version of Lithuania's European Union Accession Programme for the years 2000-2003. Over 40 government institutions at various levels have contributed to the drafting of the Programme. The European Committee under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has co-ordinated their activities, and elaborated the final Document, which was approved by the Governmental European Integration Commission on 11 May 2000.

The present LEUAP-NPAA reflects the priorities of the Accession Partnership and the Government Programme. The Programme has been elaborated on the basis of the 1998 and 1999 versions, and has taken into account recommendations made by the European Commission in its Regular Reports. The start of European Union membership negotiations and the process of screening, as well as the setting of Lithuania's target date for accession of 1 January 2004, have all contributed to achieving greater efficiency in the planning of integration.

The structure of the Lithuania's European Union Accession Programme remains the same since 1999: the Programme consists of the Descriptive policy part and two action plans: the Law Approximation Action Plan and the Acquis Implementation Action Plan, which are approved by the Government each year.

The first three Chapters (1-3) of the Descriptive part deal with the planning of integration activities related to political and economic criteria, as well as to the criteria concerning Lithuania's ability to assume the obligations of membership. Each sector provides a brief description of the current legal and institutional framework, formulates short-term and medium-term priorities, outlines the plans for approximation of legislation and institutional development, and indicates financial needs. Chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview of plans for strengthening of administrative capacities and financial needs accordingly.

Specific and detailed measures for the transposition and implementation of the *acquis* in each sector are outlined in two Annexes: Law Approximation Action Plan and Acquis Implementation Action Plan. These are complementary instruments for programming and monitoring.

The Law Approximation Action Plan specifies each transposition measure envisaged and the responsible institutions, as well as the dates by which the legislation has to be drafted and adopted.

The Acquis Implementation Action Plan sets out measures concerning organisational matters, institutional building and economic reform, as well as other measures necessary for ensuring full implementation of the *acquis communautaire*.

The Programme is a comprehensive plan of the pre-accession process. It includes both sectorial integration aspects (vertical), and individual policy implementation issues (horizontal). At the same time, the Programme covers all stages of the pre-accession process - transposition of legal acts, institution building, and implementation (investment and finance).

The timetables indicated in the Lithuania's European Union Accession Programme should not be assumed to reflect the position that Lithuania will take in accession negotiations. In view of both the integration process itself and changes in the membership preparation environment, the Programme will be updated and amended regularly.

APPROXIMATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION

Implementing the *acquis* in the field of health and safety at work, Lithuania has transposed the provisions of the framework Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, 15 (not counting amending and supplementing ones) individual directives within the meaning of Article 16

(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC and 4 other occupational safety and health directives into national law.

Preparation of new regulations is arranged by two ministries: Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Ministry of Health that implement the state policy in the field of occupational safety and health according to their competencies, as foreseen in the Law on Safety and Health at Work. The Minister of Social Security and Labour together with other ministers approves occupational safety and health legal acts by orders in which the ministers sets the dates of coming into force and orders of their application.

Social partners – employers and trade unions cooperate in every step in the field of occupational safety and health at work. Representatives of employers and trade unions participate in drafting of legislations in working groups. Legal acts are drafted by the working groups formed from the specialists of relevant ministries, universities, representatives of social partners. Every draft is considered at the Safety and Health at Work Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, which is established at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour on the tripartite basis in order to coordinate the concerns of the state, employers and employees in the field of occupational safety and health. The Commission consists of 15 members in total – representatives of employers' organizations, trade unions and state authorities (5 members each). There are also 10 Regional Safety and Health at Work Commissions established in the districts for the purpose of dealing with the questions of the implementation of the state policy in occupational safety and health field and of the prevention of occupational safety and health violations in the enterprises. Each regional Commission consists of 9 members on the same tripartite basis.

Draft laws are considered at the Three-Party Council of the Republic of Lithuania under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which comprises heads of concerned ministries, national organisations of employers and trade unions. This has influence on the understanding and implementation of new regulations.

Every newly adopted legal act is published in the official state information gazette *Valstybės Žinios*, and in periodicals issued by the State Labour Inspectorate. The State Labour Inspectorate monitors the implementation of and compliance with occupational safety and health regulations at companies and ensures a feedback by providing suggestions on the amendment and supplement of the effective regulations.

According to the framework directive 89/391/EEC the Law on Safety and Health at Work (amendment of the Law on Labour Safety) was prepared and passed by the Parliament (Seimas) on 17 October 2000. It came into force on 9 November 2000. The law also transposes principal provisions of the following directives: 93/104/EEC (working time), 94/33/EEC (young people), 92/85/EEC (pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breast-feeding).

The Law on Safety and Health at Work specifies more exactly the sphere of application, duties and rights of employers and employees, functions of Committees on Safety at Work in undertakings and the procedure for investigating occupational accidents and occupational diseases, provides for general principles of ensuring safety and health at work in the undertaking on the basis of risk assessment. The Law has been supplemented with the provision on the institution of the representatives authorised by the employees, the rights and duties of these representatives have been established.

New by-laws on the co-operation of social partners, inside control of health and safety

matters in the enterprises, and training on health and safety matters were prepared and adopted after coming into force of the Law on Safety and Health at Work.

Since 1 January 2003 the Labour Code that was adopted by the Parliament on 4 June 2002 came into force. The main task of it is to reform the labour law and legitimate the unified codified source of the labour law. The Labour Code transposes the main provisions of corresponding EU directives and consists of three parts: General Provisions, Collective Labour Relations, and Individual Labour Relations. In the Part III Individual Labour Relations there are chapters on Safety and Health at Work, Working Time, and Rest Time. At the end of 2002 new version of the Law on Safety and Health at Work was prepared, as all health and safety at work regulations have to be justified according to the Labour Code. It was decided to exclude the part on working time from the Law on Safety and Health at Work. The new version of Law on Safety and Health at Work is being considered at the Parliament.

According to all 15 individual directives within the meaning of Article 16(1) of the framework Directive 89/391/EEC these national legislative acts were prepared and adopted by the orders of corresponding ministers:

In 1998

- General Regulations on the Instalment of the Workplaces (came into force since 01/01/2000 for the new workplaces and since 01/01/2001 for the existing workplaces),
- Regulations of the Provision of Employees with Personal Protective Equipment at the Workplace (came into force since 01/01/1999),
- General Regulations of the Manual Handling of Loads (came into force since 01/01/1999),
- Regulations of the Instalment of Workplaces at the Construction Sites (came into force since 01/07/2000),
- Minimum Requirements of the Safety and Health at Work in the Mineral-Extracting Industries (came into force since 01/07/1999);

In 1999

- General Regulations on the Use of Work Equipment (came into force since 01/01/2001 for the new work equipment and will come into force from 01/01/2004 for the existing work equipment),
- Hygiene Norm HN 32:1998 "Work with Display Screen Equipment. Health and Safety Requirements" (came into force since 01/06/1999),
- Regulations on the Use of Safety and/or Health Signs at the Workplaces (came into force since 01/01/2002),
- General Regulations of the Safety and Health Requirements for Work on Board Fishing Vessels (came into force since 01/01/2002 for the new vessels and will come into force from 01/01/2004 for the existing vessels);

In 2000

- Regulations on the Safety of Workers Potentially at Risk from Explosive Atmospheres (came into force since 01/01/2001),

In 2001

- Regulations on the Protection of Workers from Risks Related to Exposure to Biological Agents at Work (came into force since 01/01/2002),
- Regulations on the Protection of Workers from Risks Related to Chemical Agents and

- Regulations on the Protection of Workers from Risks Related to Carcinogens and Mutagens (both came into force from 01/01/2003 together with the Order of Classifying Chemical Substances and Preparations).
- Hygiene Norm HN 23:2001 Concentration Limit Values of Hazardous Chemical Substances in the Working Environment Atmospheres. General Requirements (came into force since 01/01/2002) Hygiene Norm consists of binding national occupational exposure limit values.

In 2002

- Supplement of the General Regulations on the Use of Work Equipment according to the EU Directive 2001/45/EC supplementing the Directive 89/655/EEC on work equipment (will come into force from 01/01/2006),
- List of prohibited jobs and dangerous factors for pregnant women, women who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (came into force since 03/08/2002).

It is planned to prepare Regulations on the Protection of Workers from Risks Related to Vibration in the 2nd half of 2003 according to the EU Directive 2002/44/EC on vibration and Regulations on the Protection of Workers from the Risks Related to Exposure to Noise in 2004 according to the EU Directive 2003/10/EC on noise.

On the basis of Article 4a of the Directive 89/655/EEC (work equipment) the amendment of the Law on the Supervision of Potentially Dangerous Equipment was prepared and passed by the Parliament (Seimas) on 3 October 2000 (came into force on 26 October 2000). The Law was adopted seeking to ensure safety of work equipment and taking into account a long-term practice of the countries of the European Union. It sets the framework for the supervision of safety of potentially dangerous equipment. The adoption of the Law created preconditions to separate functions of supervision and control. According to the Law authorised public institutions carry out the technical control of compliance of the equipment with safety requirements. This provision decreased budgetary expenses as public institutions are not financed from the budget and have to maintain themselves from the resources received for the services of compulsory supervision rendered to the owners of potentially dangerous equipment. Technical Supervision Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was reorganised into public institution out of budgetary institution on 1 January 2001.

To implement this Law the List of Categories of Potentially Dangerous Equipment and the Procedure for Granting Authorisation to Public Institutions to Test the Technical Condition of Potentially dangerous Equipment were prepared and adopted by the Government on 29 June 2001. Also, state institutions responsible for organising supervision of potentially dangerous equipment were appointed. The List of Potentially Dangerous Equipment (indicating their parameters) that are Supervised by the Institutions Testing their Technical Condition and Registered at the State Register was prepared and approved by the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour on 26 September 2001. Three public institutions were granted the authorisation to test the technical condition of potentially dangerous equipment. The Regulations of the Register of Potentially Hazardous Equipment were prepared and adopted by the Government resolution on 9 May 2002. The State Labour Inspectorate was nominated as the manager of the Register. Technical capacities for the establishment of the register in the State Labour Inspectorate were built in 2001. All Potentially Hazardous Equipment has to be registered in the State Register until 1 January 2006.

Implementing separate occupational safety and health European Union Directives these legal acts were prepared:

In 1998

- Rules on Work with Asbestos (came into force since 01/01/1999),
- Rules on Protection of Employees from Contacts with the Monomer of Vinyl Chloride (came into force since 01/07/2000).

In 1999

- Regulations on the Protection of Workers from the Risks Related to Exposure to Noise at Work (came into force since 01/01/2002)

In 2001

Minimum Requirements for the Improved Medical Treatment on Board Vessels (will come into force from 01/01/2004)

In summary, almost all occupational safety and health legal acts are already prepared in Lithuania. Most of them are in force. Minimum Requirements for the Improved Medical Treatment on Board Vessels will come into force from 1 January 2004, General Regulations on the Safety and Health Requirements for Work on Board Fishing Vessels will fully come into force from 1 January 2004, and General Regulations on the Use of Work Equipment will fully come into force from 1 January 2006.

STATE PROGRAMME OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

Seeking to improve the conditions of safety and health of workers the State Programme of Safety and Health at Work was adopted on 22 May 2002. It obligates, after assessing the conditions of safety and health of workers, to prepare and implement preventive measures of accidents at work and occupational diseases in 2002-2003.

The programme provides for the following:

- to improve the legal basis of safety and health of workers, first and foremost, by preparing legal acts regulating the assessment of a professional risk;
- to conduct studies of the condition of safety and health of workers and on the basis of these studies, with the participation of social partners, to prepare and implement measures for improvising workplaces and work equipment;
- to improve legal acts regulating the safety and health training system and to reorganise the procedure for training specialists on safety and health of enterprise workers and other workers in the sphere of safety and health;
- to improve the system of management of safety and health of workers, to strengthen state institutions and establishments of safety and health of workers.

In implementing the programme, co-operation of social partners in the sphere of improving safety and health of workers will further be developed. The measures planned will help the employers ensure safety and health of workers from all aspects related to work, and will provide the possibility for the workers to use the right enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania to have safe and healthy working conditions. The implementation of the Programme measures will create preconditions to completely fulfil obligations of the Republic of Lithuania assumed to the European Union in the sphere of safety and health.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CONTROL AND CONSULTING

The State Labour Inspectorate is executing the prevention of violations of legal acts regulating safety and health at work in enterprises through the function of control of how these legal acts are followed. The main function of the State Labour Inspectorate is to control how the provisions of labour relations and occupational safety and health legislation are being implemented in the enterprises.

Another function of the State Labour Inspectorate is to consult workers, trade unions, employers, services at the enterprises on the questions of the requirements of occupational safety and health, implementation of labour law and collective agreements and contracts. The State Labour Inspectorate pursue this function by consulting persons addressing the State Labour Inspectorate and by spreading the information through the Internet, where all persons concerned with the information can find data about the State Labour Inspectorate, occupational health and safety legislation and its application, occupational health and safety condition in the country, events and publications. Inspection divisions of the State Labour Inspectorate in the centres of the districts deliver lectures at the enterprises according to the schedule set out in advance, consult employers and employees, social partners` organisations.

In order to properly implement the *acquis* in the field of occupational safety and health, the number of the labour inspectors of the State Labour Inspectorate was increased from 174 in 2001 to 187 in 2002 year.

ACCIDENTS AT WORK AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Main provisions on accidents at work and occupational diseases are set in the Law on Safety and Health at Work. In implementing it the Regulations of Investigating and Taking Account of Accidents at Work as well as the Regulations of Investigating and Taking Account of Occupational Diseases were adopted by the Government resolutions in June 2001. Both regulations have replaced old ones and come into force since summer 2001.

ACCIDENTS AT WORK

In Lithuanian law accidents at work and accidents on the way to/from work (thereinafter accidents at work) are classified according to their consequences, number of workers injured, and relation to work.

According to their consequences accidents at work are classified into:

- minor accident at work: an event during which a worker suffers a trauma and loses functional capacity for at least one day and which is not classified as a serious accident at work;
- serious accident at work: an event during which a worker suffers a trauma which poses risk to his or her health and/or life. Specific features which classify a trauma as serious are approved by the Ministry of Health Care;
- fatal accident at work: an event during which a worker suffers a trauma which poses a risk to his or her health and/or life and in consequence of which the worker dies immediately or some time later.

According to the number of workers injured accidents are classified into single accidents

at work (one worker injured) and group accidents at work (more than one worker injured).

According to the relation to work accidents at work are classified to:

- related to work: an incident which after the investigation is established to have taken place in the course of performing work agreed upon in the employment contract or other work assigned by or with the consent of the employer, or on the way to work or from work, or an event which takes place on the way to or from work shall be considered an accident at work;
- not related to work: an incident when after the investigation it is established that the worker consciously tried to kill or injure himself/herself; that the worker suffered from violence the circumstances and reasons of which are not related to work, that the worker was committing a criminal offence or that the worker was performing a task arbitrarily (without the consent of the employer) in pursuit of his own goals.

All undertakings shall apply a uniform and obligatory procedure for the investigation of accidents at work established by the Law and the Regulations for Investigation and Registration of Accidents at Work. All accidents at work must be investigated; the investigation results must be recorded in the reports of prescribed form and registered according to the established procedure.

Minor accidents at work are, by order of the employer or other executive document, investigated by a bilateral commission consisting of a representative/representatives of the employer and the workers. The worker who is the victim of the accident may participate in the investigation of the accident at work.

Serious and fatal accidents at work are investigated by the State Labour Inspectorate with the representatives of the employer and the workers participating. While investigating the accident at work, the State Labour Inspectorate shall ascertain the causes and circumstance of the accident at work, suggest measures for the elimination of causes of similar accidents.

An accident at work which caused the death of three or more workers are investigated by a commission whose chairman is the Chief State Labour Inspector of the Republic of Lithuania and members - Deputy Chief State Labour Inspector of the Republic of Lithuania, head of the territorial division of the State Labour Inspectorate and two labour inspectors from the division. Representatives of the employer and workers shall also take part in the investigation.

Investigation reports of all accidents at work are preserved and registered at the State Labour Inspectorate.

74 fatal, 145 serious, 2311 minor accidents, which were established to have been related to work, occurred in Lithuanian enterprises in 2002. The figures do not exceed the average numbers of accidents at work during the last 5 years. The average numbers are 76, 154, and 2311 correspondingly.

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

In Lithuanian law occupational diseases are classified according to the time of manifestation and the symptoms of a disease:

- chronic: a health disorder of a worker caused by one or more hazardous and/or

dangerous factors in his or her working environment within a certain time period.

- acute: an acute health disorder of a worker caused by a short-term (single or repeated during the working day) exposure to a factor/factors in the working environment having an acute effect.

A suspected occupational disease is diagnosed for a worker who is or was employed in the undertaking by a doctor who has a licence to engage in these activities, in accordance with the Regulations for the Investigation and Registration of Occupational Diseases and the List of Occupational Diseases.

The causes of the occupational disease are investigated by the commission for the investigation of occupational disease, which shall also diagnose the disease as an occupational disease. The commission consists of the state labour inspector (acting as commission chairman), a representative of the territorial institution of public health care and the doctor who suspected the occupational disease. Representatives of the employer and workers shall also be taking part in the investigation.

Disputed issues relating to the diagnosing of occupational diseases are settled by the Central Occupational Medicine Experts Commission the regulations and compositions of which are approved by the Ministry of Health Care.

Acute occupational diseases which resulted in the death of three or more workers shall be investigated by a commission whose chairman is the Chief State Labour Inspector of the Republic of Lithuania and members - the Deputy Chief Hygiene Specialist of the Republic of Lithuania, head of the territorial (inspection) division of the State Labour Inspectorate, one representative of the State Labour Inspectorate and one representative of the Public Health Care Service of the territorial institution. Representatives of the employer and the workers shall also participate in the investigation.

Occupational diseases are registered in the State Register of Occupational Diseases at the Labour medicine Centre.

801 cases of occupational diseases were registered in Lithuania in 2002. The figure is the biggest since 1997. Prevalent occupational diseases are ear diseases and vibration diseases.

INSURANCE FROM ACCIDENTS AT WORK AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Insurance from accidents at work and occupational diseases is regulated by the Law on Social Insurance of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases (came into force since 1 January 2001). It regulates the relations of social insurance of occupational accident and occupational disease occurrences, (further - social insurance of occupational accidents), stipulate the categories of persons who shall be insured with this type of social insurance, rights to such insurance benefits, conditions, calculation and payment of benefits, and define insurable and non-insurable occurrences.

According to the Law accident at work denotes sudden harm caused to the health of an employee, due to the effect of dangerous work environment, harmful, short-lived effect of a dangerous factor (factors) duly registered according to the established procedure, when an employee shall suffer partial or total work disablement or die as a result of it; occupational disease denotes sudden or chronic deterioration in the health of an employee, caused by

one or more harmful and (or) dangerous factors in the work environment, which in accordance with the established procedure has been acknowledged as an occupational disease. The acknowledgement is made by the Territorial Division of the State Social Insurance Fund after occupational accidents are investigated and recognized as accidents at work related to work or professional diseases.

Persons covered by social insurance of occupational accidents are:

- persons employed according to labour, diplomatic service or term, diplomatic service contract as well as those employed as members in elective institutions, economic associations, agricultural companies or co-operative organisations and receiving wages for their work;
- state public administration employees;
- pupil of vocational schools, college and university students at the institution or enterprise during their occupational training (practice) or enterprise and persons sent by enterprises to retrain or to engage in public works;
- persons at institutions of social and psychological rehabilitation institutions, for their work time;
- those sentenced to imprisonment, for their work time.

The persons noted in items 3 - 5 of this paragraph are insured if they receive wages for their work.

Self-employed persons may insure themselves on a voluntary basis, against occupational accidents.

The funds designated for social insurance of occupational accidents is included in the State Social Insurance Fund Budget Account. It is set by the Law on Validation of Indices of State Social Insurance Fund Budget Account of 2003 that rate on social insurance of occupational accidents for insurers is 31 percent and its part allocated for social insurance of occupational accidents is 0,3 percent. At the beginning it was set in the Law on Validation of Indices of State Social Insurance Fund Budget Account of 2001 that the part allocated for social insurance of occupational accidents was 1 percent, but employers were not satisfied with this. The benefits were less than the contributions for social insurance of occupational accidents. Thus seeking not to increase the total budget of the State social Insurance Fund and to balance it the rates on social insurance were reallocated. The part of contributions for social insurance of occupational accidents was decreased and the part of contributions for pensions was increased.

PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITY OF THE EUROPEAN AGENCY OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

The European Agency of Safety and Health at Work is established to accumulate and provide technical, scientific and economic information on the issues of safety at work and occupational health to the institutions of the European Community, member states and interested states.

Every candidate country, seeking to participate in the activities of the Agency, must establish a communications centre whose basic objectives are as follows:

- engagement of corresponding workers of safety and health institutions and social partners in the national network;
- participation in the process of information dissemination and the creation of new information;

- the creation and maintenance of the website of the Agency in the candidate country.

The European Union provided material assistance through the Agency to the candidate countries to establish focal points. In the fourth quarter of 2001 the Communications Centre was established at the State Labour Inspectorate, which created the information network between the Agency, safety and health of workers institutions and establishments in Lithuania, social partners and educational institutions at the end of that year already. The website was opened in the summer of 2002 and an effective system of exchanging information between the networks partners was created.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The implementation of international projects is an important precondition for the development of the social security and labour system. On account of these projects not only consultation of foreign experts are given but also institutional base of Lithuania is consolidated, training of servants of institutions is conducted, the policy of occupational safety and health is implemented and different investigations are carried out.

PHARE PROGRAMME PROJECTS

The Project for the Institutional Development of the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) was started in the first half of 1998 and completed in August 1999. It was aimed at strengthening institutional capacities of the SLI in enhancing the process of integration and developing a proper training strategy for the SLI personnel.

The Project for Support to Approximation of Legislation in Occupational Safety and Health with European Union Legal Acts was started in the first half of 1998 and was completed in May 1999. The following results of the project have been achieved:

- two draft laws on occupational safety and health were prepared into which four large European Union Directives were exactly transposed. The analysis of possible application of these laws in Lithuania was prepared;
- seeking to assess the effect of the application of the principles of the European Union framework Directive in the sphere of occupational safety and health, the methodology for making the expenditure-usefulness analysis according to the present data was prepared;
- a visit of the civil servants of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the State Labour Inspectorate and the representatives of the social partners participating in the work of Tripartite Commission on Safety at Work to the Health and Safety institution in Ireland was organized. During the visit the possibilities of cooperation between the social partners in solving the problems of occupational safety and health were clearly demonstrated.

Twinning Project on Strengthening Enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Policy was started in September 2000 and completed in May 2002. In carrying out this project foreign experts analysed legal acts on safety and health of workers in Lithuania; organised workshops of occupational risk assessment and practical training to labour inspectors, representatives of trade unions and employers' organisations; held workshops to labour inspectors, manufacturers and representative of supervision institutions on the issues of safety of machinery, safety of lifts and requirements for personal protective measures. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the State Labour Inspectorate became acquainted with the work of occupational safety and health institutions in Germany and France, Member State's

experience in occupational risk assessment. Foreign experts together with Lithuanian labour inspectors prepared the 'Occupational Risk Assessment Manual', which is available on the website of the State Labour Inspectorate. Software for the database of inspecting and risk rating of the State Labour Inspectorate was improved, and a description of the database of occupational accidents was prepared.

OTHER PROJECTS

The Project 'Sector Integrated Assistance of the Baltic Region to Environment – Safety and Health at Work – Asbestos' was started in 2000 and completed in 2001. Under this project in co-operation with the Labour Environment Agency of Denmark recommendation material about asbestos, its harmfulness, safety measures and use in various spheres was prepared and published, seminars to labour inspectors and representatives of other interested institutions about the implementation of legal acts regulating work with asbestos were organised.

The Project 'Work Life and EU Enlargement' was started in March 2001. It is a three-year long project financed by the Government of Sweden and aimed at supporting the labour market policy and improving conditions of safety and health of workers in candidate countries. Each participating candidate country prepared its practical implementation project. In Lithuania it was decided to organise the seminar "Assessment of the Occupational Risk at Wood Processing Enterprises" for labour inspectors and social partners, prepare and publish booklets on risk assessment and to prepare the Glossary of Terms of Occupational Health and Safety in 2003.

CONCLUSIONS

In the process of integration into the European Union tasks of primary importance should be considered the timely and proper implementation of the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* together with the Accession Partnership Programme, the implementation of the provisions of the Europe (Association) Agreement, further execution of the PHARE Programme projects.