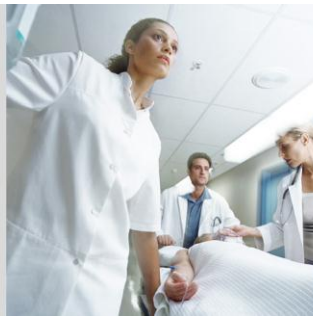




PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK
ASSESSMENTS

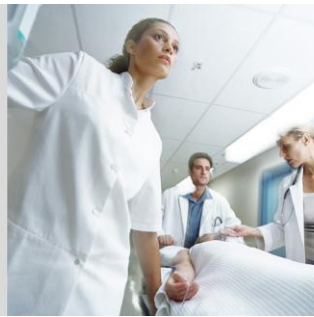


SLIC 2012 - Campaign on psychosocial risks – Country report I

BULGARIA

General description





National legislation

One of the issues, bearing relation to the campaign and, in particular, to its inspection part, is the national legislation.

The basic normative acts in the field of occupational safety and health set framework requirements, as regards the psychosocial risks. In Appendix I are quoted the specific texts of the said legislation. According to the normative acts, a risk assessment shall cover all work aspects. The legislator demands an assessment of the working environment as a source of risk, and of psychosocial risks, in particular. The said requirement is further evolved with the normatively defined obligations of the employer to control and improve the work-related psychosocial factors.

The national legislation makes no provision for detailed specification of the factors to be controlled and improved. An exception from the above said are the requirements for risk assessment dealing with video displays, in terms of stress, as well as the issues related to various forms of violence and discrimination, subject to a special act beyond the competence of the General Labour Inspectorate Executive Agency (GLI-EA).

Not focused on the psychosocial risks only, some of the normative acts set requirements largely in relation to them.

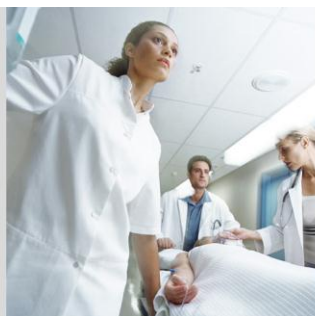
A part of the said requirements concern the following:

- Written specification of the duties of each worker, in a job profile;
- The working hours, the rest periods and the leaves, as well as overtime work;
- Working out Rules for the Internal Labour Discipline;
- Working out a physiological regime of work and rest, when stipulated by law;
- Shorter working hours for certain types of work;
- Special protection for some categories of workers.

As regards the methodology for assessment of the psychosocial risks, the legislator makes no provision for a mandatory one.

In the Republic of Bulgaria is also used standard BDS EN ISO 10075 “Ergonomic principles related to mental stress at work” in three parts, with no power of legislation, as the application of standards is voluntary.





As already stated above, the law rather sets framework requirements in relation to the psychosocial risks. This fact, combined with the absence of uniform, generally applicable methodologies for assessment of the psychosocial risks, was decisive as regards the main goal of the campaign: “Involvement of as many people as possible, having an impact on the working conditions, in matters related to the “psychosocial risks”. The campaign was aimed not only at calling for the implementation of measures, using the powers vested on the GLI-EA by law, but also at attracting the involvement of the social partners in the issue of “psychosocial risk”. The underlying goals of the campaign went in two directions, corresponding to the two provisionally independent campaigns:

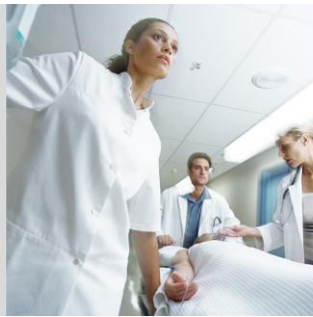
1. Inspection: Making the biggest possible number of inspections in the health and transport sectors. The indicators for the attainment of that goal were the following:

- Increase by 7% of the number of the enterprises in the economic activities of “Human health and social work” and “Freight transport by road”, with improved working conditions as regards psychosocial risks;
- Increase by 5% of the number of the enterprises in the economic activity of “Human health and social work”, with improved quality of the made risk assessment, in relation to psychosocial risks;
- Increase by 2% of the number of the enterprises in the economic activity of “Freight transport by road”, with improved quality of the made risk assessment, in relation to psychosocial risks.

2. Information: Informing the social partners and the general public. The indicators for the attainment of that goal were the following:

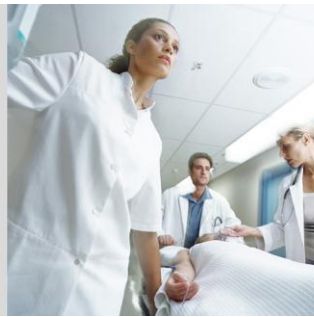
- Creation of a subsite to GLI-EA’s website;
- Media releases about the launching of the campaign. Attendance of media representatives at an inspection in a hospital;
- Printed and disseminated information materials. With the financial support of the Working Conditions Fund (a fund, established with an Act, to finance measures for improvement of the working conditions) was published the initially planned number of materials, as quoted in Section “Development of national information materials for the campaign”;
- Information and materials presented to the Regional Working Conditions Councils;
- Pressconferences conducted at local level;
- Special areas exhibiting campaign materials, laid out in the local offices of the GLI-EA.





Sectors inspected	In line with GLI-EA's Annual Plan of Action, the inspection campaign covered the sectors "Human health and social work" and "Freight transport by road".
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SLIC inspection
tools and methods

In the selection of inspection methods decisive was the fact that it was the first campaign of this type to be conducted in the Republic of Bulgaria, having also in mind that the inspectors had applied no uniform methods of inspection of psychosocial risks before. Hence, a decision was made that in the campaign were to be used the methods and the tools, developed by the organisers. The following methods were set and used as basic ones (applied in each enterprise):

- Filling in questionnaires by employees;
- Meetings and interviews with employers;
- Observations at the worksite;
- Interviews with individual employees.

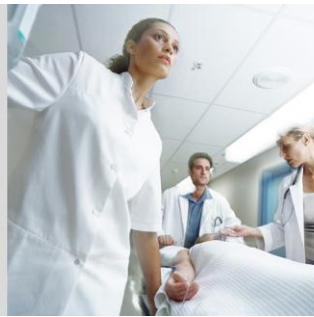
In addition to the already said above, all inspectors taking part in the campaign were also informed about the methods, involving various forms of group sessions and discussions. It was recommended that the latter should be used at the discretion of the individual inspector. (The results of the campaign show that the said methods were applied at some inspections in enterprises from the economic activity of “Human health and social work”.)

The tools used in the realization of the control on the psychosocial factors at the workplace are the following:

- Guidance - inspection of psychosocial risks at work;
- Work aid/interview guidelines for evaluating risk assessments with regard to psychological stress, Germany;
- Risk assessment essentials, checklist No 11: Hazard: Stress at work, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work;
- Guidance tool for hospitals (Denmark), Danish Working Environment Authority);
- Guidance tool for the transport of goods (Denmark), Danish Working Environment Authority);
- Questionnaire (Finland), Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate.

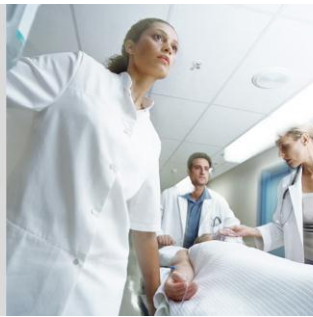
The said tools were used unchanged, both in terms of editing and as regards adding or skipping text passages.



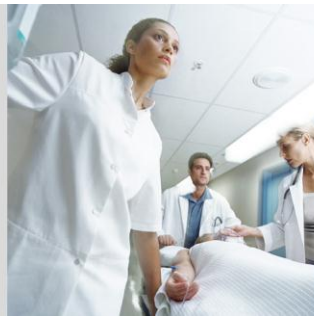


<p>National tools (existing tools, development of new national tools or adjustment of campaign tools)</p>	<p>In the preparatory phase of the campaign an assessment was made that the methods and the tools proposed by the campaign organizers are fully in line with the conditions in the country and the level of expertise of the labour inspectors, therefore they were used with no change in the content, as said above.</p>
<p>Number of labour inspectors</p>	<p>For better holding of the campaign were prepared instructions for conducting and reporting the campaign initiated by the SLIC. The said guidance specified the tasks of the persons involved.</p> <p>The inspection campaign was assigned to competent inspectors, who underwent specialized training, 60 persons altogether, forming 15 % of the GLI-EA's staff.</p> <p>Involved in the information campaign were all 394 inspectors of the GLI-EA.</p>





<p>Training</p>	<p>An essential part of the preparation for the campaign was the training conducted for the labour inspectors who carried out the inspections. The main goal of the training was to acquire knowledge and skills, needed for making inspections in relation to evaluating the psychosocial risks in the objects of control. The syllabus covered three main sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosocial risks – importance of the problem; • Methods and tools for evaluating the psychosocial risks – an overview; • Holding the campaign. Practical aspects. <p>Every trained inspector attended two 2-day workshops. In the 30-day period between the workshops, two-man teams of trainees underwent individual practical training, performing two inspections each and the results were discussed at the concluding (second) workshop.</p> <p>Lecturers in the training were members of GLI-EA’s staff, as well as external experts – an occupational health doctor and a psychologist.</p> <p>The training materials were basically the tools presented at the meeting in Luxembourg in 2011, adapted in line with the national legislation. In addition were elaborated training materials, concerning the specificity of the national campaign.</p> <p>The full course of the training was passed by 60 people, who later took part in the inspection campaign.</p>
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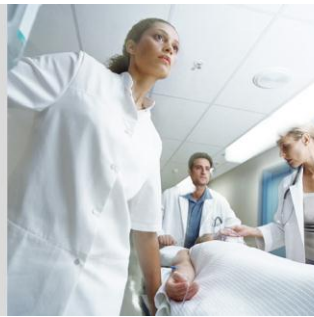


National evaluation
or follow-up

In accordance with the annual planning procedures, all aspects of the activity are analyzed with a view to improving the quality of performance. That also pertains to SLIC 2012 campaign. Based on the results obtained, the campaign was evaluated as a success. That fact, in addition to the specific experience gained by the persons involved, gave us grounds to plan inspections on the psychosocial risks for 2013 again, this time in the sectors of “Hotels” and “Restaurants”.

A form of assessment of the achievements are the follow-up inspections in the visited enterprises. So far, such inspections have been made in more than 20% of them. That percentage will grow as the time for making follow-up inspections is in relation to the deadlines for fulfillment of the given prescriptions and in a number of instances the specified time period has not expired.

The findings from the follow-up inspections show that the main goal has been attained – measures are undertaken on an issue that is relatively new and underrated to an extent.



Development of national information materials

The main materials for the campaign were the ones the organizers presented to us. In addition, the *Mental Workload* brochure was also used, developed by an international team of experts with the participation of a GLI-EA representative. The said brochure may be found at:

<http://www.issa.int/Resources/Resources/Mental-Workload> .

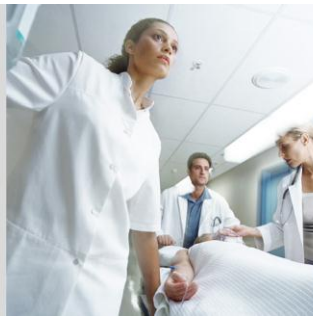
The brochure was also printed in 1000 copies and was disseminated during the campaign. It is a part of a series of such materials developed for small and medium-sized enterprises.

A detailed list of the information materials may be seen below:

No	Title	No of copies
1.	<i>Mental Workload</i> brochure	1000
2.	Checklist: Hazard: Stress at work	1000
3.	Evaluating psychosocial risks: Guidance tool for hotels and restaurants	1000
4.	Guidance – the inspection of psychosocial risks at work	2000
5.	Poster – ”Evaluating psychosocial risks”, European inspection campaign 2012	2000
6.	Questionnaire (Finland) ”Psychosocial risks”	1000
	Total:	8000

(2) The acceptance of the delivery of the materials was acknowledged through bilateral undersigning of a handover protocol between the parties.





<p>Development of a national campaign website</p>	<p>Information about the campaign was released on a subsite to GLI-EA's website. Through a link, the said subsite made it possible to use materials about the campaign, published in Bulgarian.</p> <p>The subsite may be found at:</p> <p>http://www.gli.government.bg/page.php?c=47&d=653</p>
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APPENDIX 1:

1. Healthy and Safe Working Conditions Act – Article 12, Article 16, paragraph 1

Article 12. Physiological work/break schedules shall be introduced in order to protect health and working capacity of employees with a view to alleviating work accompanied by high neuro-psychological tension, predetermined work-rate, monotony, forced working posture or shift work.

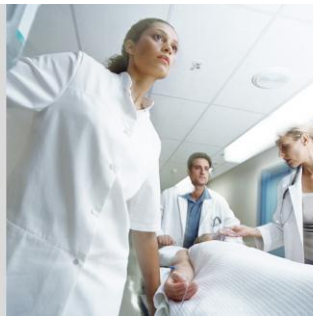
Article 16. (1) Within the context of his or her activities necessary to provide healthy and safe working conditions, the employer shall:

1. assess the risks to the safety and health of employees including selection of work equipment, use of chemical substances and preparations and workplace organization;
2. in accordance with the risk assessment results and where needed, plan and implement preventive measures and work methods that shall:
 - a) secure improved level of workers' protection;
 - b) be integrated in all activities and structural units of the enterprise.

2. Ordinance No 7 dated 23.09.1999 on the minimum requirements for occupational health and safety at the workplaces and in the use of work equipment

Article 217. (2) Risk assessment shall cover all aspects of the work in the enterprise.

Article 220. Work-related psychosocial factors shall be controlled and improved through the implementation of prophylactic programs, specific for each type of work, to alleviate the mental workload and stress.



3. Ordinance No 5 dated 11.05.1999 on the procedure, method and frequency of making risk assessment

Article 3. Risk assessment shall cover:

item 5. work organization;

item 7. other adverse factors likely to cause risk.

4. Ordinance No 7 dated 15.08.2005 on the minimum requirements for securing occupational health and safety working with video displays

Article 3. (1) An employer shall make risk assessment of the workplaces with video displays, to identify the possible risks for workers' health and safety, especially with respect to the vision, the muscular-skeletal system, occurrence of mental stress and other.

(2) An employer shall undertake adequate measures to prevent or reduce the risks under paragraph 1 above, taking into consideration the possibilities for their additional and/or combined effect.

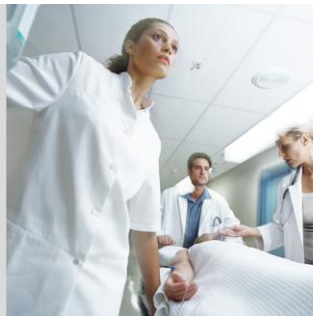
5. Protection against Discrimination Act

Article 17. An employer, who has received a complaint from a worker or an employee, assuming himself/herself a victim of bullying, including sexual harassment, at the workplace, shall immediately make an inspection, undertake measures to discontinue the bullying and to impose disciplinary action, where another worker or employee has been the perpetrator of bullying.

Article 18. An employer, in collaboration with the trade unions, shall undertake effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination at the workplace.

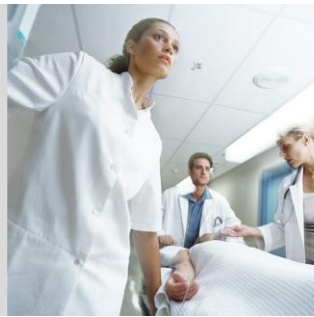
Article 50. Procedure before the commission shall be opened upon:

item 3. signals of physical persons and legal entities, of government and municipal bodies.

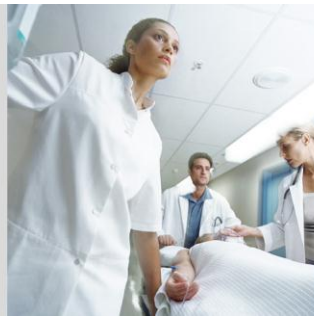


Assessment of the campaign

<p>Usefulness of background material</p>	<p>The basic materials, presented during the training, were used for individual work prior to performing the inspections, to raise employers' and employees' awareness about the goal of the campaign and, above all, in the inspection process. Extremely useful was the Guidance for inspection of psychosocial risks at work and the questionnaires for the employers and for the workers, which were used to sum up the results of the performed inspections. The presented materials were helpful and were used to correct, supplement and make risk assessment more thorough as regards the psychosocial risks for workers' safety and health. The guidance for inspection and for the interviews was used as a starting point for a comprehensive analysis of the employers' attitude to the psychosocial factors of the working environment in workplace risk assessment.</p>
<p>Usefulness of the inspection tools (toolkit)</p>	<p>The use of the above said methods and tools made possible a relatively precise evaluation of the psychosocial factors in the working environment and to set the priorities. Quite many employers used the results from the questionnaires to prepare their own program for constraint of the mental workload and work-related stress.</p> <p>The examined questionnaires were used to make a statistical analysis, outlining the problems in the inspected enterprises. Another positive effect of using the questionnaires was that their second filling in (during the follow-up inspections) made it possible to draw a comparable analysis of the replies and to track the changes.</p>



<p>Usefulness of the project flyer</p>	<p>The presented flyer is written in simple language and gives visual information to introduce the topic of the campaign. It was used as “the face of the campaign”, to raise the awareness of employers, workers and employees about the campaign goals.</p> <p>The flyer was disseminated in each inspected object (enterprise) and was placed in the special information area arrayed in the majority of them.</p>
<p>Usefulness of the project website</p>	<p>Presenting materials during the campaign, attention was drawn to the fact that information was available at: http://www.av.se/slic2012/bulgarian.aspx</p> <p>At the inspections it was found that the workers were aware of the website, due to the posters presented for the campaign, placed prominently. The workers found it interesting to read the materials, as no information on that topic had been made available to them before. The website was helpful both because of the possibility to print out directly from internet excerpts of the materials, needed in the realization of the inspections and for raising the awareness of the workers in the enterprises about the goals of the campaign. The labour inspectors recommended that the website should be used in aid of the elaboration of risk assessments and programs to reduce the mental tension at work.</p>



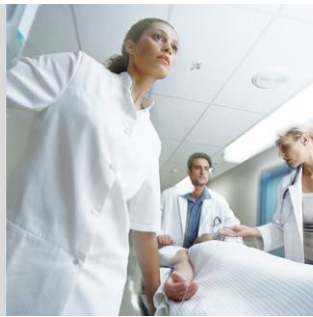
Description of good examples, in attachment if needed

After the inspections that were performed, the programs for reduction of the mental tension and stress at work were expanded to cover measures such as: conducting team building; rehabilitation exercises organized for workers, doing tasks under a high level of stress; training of the staff to deal with risk groups; more frequent meetings of the staff with the top management to discuss specific problems; consultation with the workers concerning the work organization, content and load; good performance rewards for the workers, and other.

In one of the inspected hospitals the employer had appointed a psychologist to conduct as follows: psychological training; examination and instruction of the staff; consultations to the workers on psychological matters; assistance in the settlement of crises, conflicts, problems of a different nature, occurring at the workplace, etc. In other hospitals was organized training on the topic of “Managing Stress”, where the lecturer was a consultant psychologist, parallel to drum therapy. The staff is familiar with techniques for managing stress, such as relaxation, balancing desire and potential, self-control.

At inspection in the sector of “Freight transport by road” was encountered good practice with respect to risk assessment, covering the existing potential psychosocial factors. All work areas and activities (management and administration, transport and technical activities) were evaluated from the perspective of the psychosocial factors.

In some enterprises in the transport sector was established that the employers had organized a comprehensive study on psychosocial risks and work-related stress. Using such questionnaires (of up to 120 questions), training on safety and health at work had been conducted on a regular basis, discussing also issues related to the psychosocial stress, workload, etc.

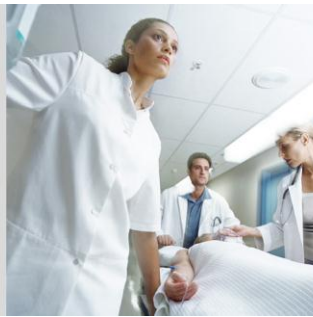


The inspectors' overall experiences of the campaign

Conducting the campaign, no previous experience was used, in the absence of formerly held training courses or campaigns on the topic of psychosocial risks and stress.

That explains the fact that all inspectors, trained and involved in the campaign, mention they gained new knowledge and skills to be used in the future. They see positively the real opportunity to study "closely" the problem of "Stress at work", as well as to help employers and safety officials with advice and consultations, in the planning of measures to reduce the work-related psychosocial risk.





The employers' experiences of the campaign

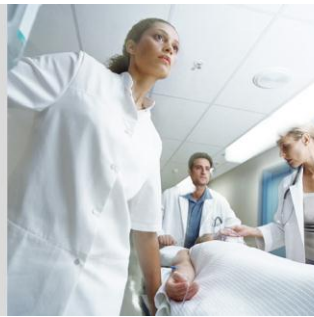
In effect of the campaign, a bigger number of employers paid more attention to the issues related to the psychosocial risk and, respectively, will take measures to restrict and minimize that risk. Besides, they said they also perceived the huge stress and load in effect of the psychosocial factors, therefore they would make use of the provided information themselves, to take care of their own health, in addition to that of the workers.

The employers in the sector of "Human health and social work" seemed to be interested in the campaign and were very well prepared for the meetings with the inspectors. They availed themselves of the opportunity to discuss possible measures they could undertake to constrain the impact of the psychosocial factors in their organization. The said employers understood that the implementation of such measures would contribute effectively to improve the working conditions, as well as to avoid work-related accidents and diseases.

At the inspections in the sector of "Freight transport by road" it was established that some employers were unaware of the problems related to the psychosocial factors.

On the whole, the employers in the inspected enterprises changed their attitude to the psychosocial problems on the workplace and became aware what a powerful factor the good psychosocial environment was for workers' efficiency and adaptability, as well as for the good organization and management of the activity.

The tables below give a quantitative evaluation of the effect of the campaign.



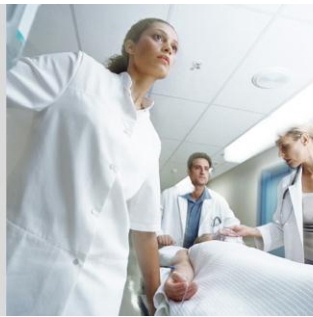
Evaluation

5 - very much; 4 - somewhat; 3 - undecided; 2 – not really; 1 – not at all.

	5	4	3	2	1
Did the campaign influence the national priorities?	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Did the campaign induce measures in the enterprises?	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Did the campaign contribute to the OSH management and prevention culture in enterprises?	26.7%	53.3%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Did the campaign contribute to inform employers and workers?	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Did the campaign induce an increase in adequate risk assessments?	51.7%	41.4%	3.4%	3.4%	0.0%
Did the campaign improve the national OSH infrastructure?	20.0%	50.0%	26.7%	3.3%	0.0%
Did the campaign stimulate enforcement in SME's and high risk sectors?	27.6%	51.7%	13.8%	6.9%	0.0%
Did the exchange of information with other member states stimulate national development?	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: On the basis of the distribution of the replies of the participants in the campaign (in percentage) was filled in the table below.





Evaluation

Please, scale the following aspects of the event on a 1-5 basis, where 5 signifies “very much”, 4-“somewhat”, 3 – “undecided”, 2 – “not really” and 1 - “not at all”.

	5	4	3	2	1
Did the campaign influence the national priorities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the campaign induce measures in the enterprises?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the campaign contribute to the OSH management and prevention culture in enterprises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the campaign contribute to inform employers and workers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the campaign induce an increase in adequate risk assessments?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the campaign improve the national OSH infrastructure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the campaign stimulate enforcement in SME:s and high risk sectors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the exchange of information with other member states stimulate national development?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

