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Ladies and Gentlemen:

The proceedings of the Eight International Symposium have come to end and it is my duty to deliver the epilogue. At this point I would like to try and draw conclusions, give some perspectives, but mostly I would like to say thanks.

During the past 3 days, we all treated occupational health and safety issues, in an intensive manner. At the same time, we set and underlined the example of chemical risks but referred to other risks as well.

Starting from the common goals of all European Union countries we aspired to a high occupational health and safety level and dealt mostly with the tools that are both useful and necessary for the materialization of this target.

From a great number of discourses in the frame of the symposium, it became apparent that these tools should, at different levels, fulfil completely different operations and this is why there can be no global tool that could perform all implementation operations.

If, for example, the European Law on Dangerous Substances is transferred by means of a law to the legal system of a member state, this surely constitutes an important step towards its implementation, but doesn't suffice to guarantee the safe treatment of dangerous substances in enterprises.

What is rather needed is a set of different tools addressed to different groups with different operations in the field of occupational prevention.

The most important target groups are employers and people working at enterprises. They undoubtedly play the leading role, since the risks that arise at work can be effectively prevented only at this same place.

Equally important are those target groups that assume a consulting role for enterprises' employees and executives, for example, in matters of occupational medicine and health, psychology, ergonomics and safety. National authorities that are responsible for the supervision of health measures at work also constitute an important target group.

All these target-groups need therefore suitable tools for their work. Whether one tool for occupational safety fulfils its aim can only be proven by its implementation in real conditions inside the company. That is why the intracompany evaluation is necessary for all tools for occupational safety. At the same time experience has shown that tools that were effective in big companies are not necessarily suitable for small businesses.

The elaboration and examination of effective tools at work constitutes, and this became clear in many discourses, an interdisciplinary duty. Apart from business practices, the collaboration of researchers and experts of different disciplines and national institutions for safety and health at work is necessary.

All suitable forms of information exchange with regard to education and training, the creation of incentives and motivation should thus be employed to enhance the implementation of suitable tools.

The meaning and aim of our symposium was to make the international exchange of views and experience possible.

Business technicians, scientists, legislation and supervision state authorities, the insurance experts for labour accidents, social partners and representatives of European services, all had the chance to expose their views. I got the impression that this field was accepted that was extensively used at a high level of specialisation.

Is it possible to draw conclusions from the speeches, the wall presentations and the discussions? I think it is, if one is happy with a temporary conclusion. With regard to this, let me refer to three points:

1. All European countries have the same goals as far the safety and health at Work is concerned. This is why the path chosen, the results obtained and the accumulated experience of every country can be compared at a European level. The possibility to adopt consecrated tools from other countries would, of course, be the ideal solution. But in many cases this should immediately be excluded, due to the national particularities; still the cross-border incentives expected are extremely useful. For this reason, the exchange of experiences in relation to the protection at work at a national and international level is much appreciated.
2. What's more there are problematic fields, for which the results are anything but satisfactory. In many such cases, the tools are either not the best available or cannot be yet implemented. Some problematic fields obviously exist across Europe. At this point, I would mostly like to refer to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) for which, in some fields, more should and could have been done for the occupational safety and health. The elaboration of effective tools for the improvement of safety at work in these enterprises still constitutes a particular and single wish. Some discourses presented encouraging approaches. These should be further monitored, extensively implemented and developed with the help of experience. Here there undoubtedly exists a strong need for research and development.
3. The extensive automation of labour and the progressive condensation of occupational procedures pose the question how the working conditions should be formed in order for them to meet human capacities. This is particularly true to the extent that in the future employees with higher age limits have to be taken into account. The human shaping of labour constitutes, in my opinion, a challenge to be addressed by occupational safety to an even grater degree in the future, as mentioned in today's discourses.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in these three summarizing points, I also referred to issues that are to be addressed by research and which will play an important role to the works of IVSS in the future. Let's say that these belong to the points of IVSS Programme.

To draw conclusions from this event means also say «thank you» for the perfect hospitality we experienced here in the country of science and research.

Let me at first thank those who prepared, organised and practically promoted this symposium:

- First, the Greek authorities and the Hellenic Institute for Occupational Health and Safety – ELINYAE
- the European Commission and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
- the Greek Scientific Centre – DEMOKRITOS
- the members of the Symposium's Scientific Committee
- the member of the organisational committee,

I would also like to thank all those who prepared discourses for this symposium and presented them in the form of wall presentations or speeches. A big thanks goes to the Keynote-Speakers. They elaborated the scientific substance of the symposium offering thus the most important work to us.

I also thank the co-ordinators of the discussion, who contributed decisively to the conduct of the organisation by their effective management.

I thank those who, through the discussion gave us colour and spur.

I thank the interpreters, who rendered excellent services and made the comprehension between us possible and I thank for the technical support.

Finally, I thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for your participation in this event.

Last, I would like to thank the President of the symposium and personal friend of mine, Professor Vassilis Makropoulos, both personally and on behalf of those who, as visitors, enjoyed our stay in Greece and had such good time in Athens. To him, to the members of the supervision committee and to all the collaborators of ELINYAE I wish every success for their further work on health and safety services for Greek workers. I hope that this symposium gave a beneficial push to this direction.

Here ends the Eighth International Symposium of the ISSA Research Section and I wish to you all a good trip without accidents, back to your place of stay and all the best.