

PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

Every year 5,720 people die in the European Union as a consequence of work-related accidents, according to EUROSTAT figures. The International Labour Organisation estimates that 159,500 workers additionally die each year from occupational diseases in the EU. Taking both figures into consideration, it is estimated that every three-and-a-half minutes somebody in the EU dies from work-related causes and that every four-and-a-half seconds an EU worker is involved in an accident that forces him/her to stay at home for at least three working days.

The FP7 Research for the Benefit of SME's IMOSHION 'Improving Occupational Safety & Health in European SMEs with help of simulation and Virtual Reality' project aimed to improve the application of OSH regulations in European SMEs by providing low cost and easy to use tools addressing OSH concerns in manufacturing sectors.

The current situation in relation to OSH is that all SMEs in Europe have to obey the national derivatives of the European Framework Directive (89/391/EEG) and its underlying twenty-three guidelines. As there are many more rules to follow, this is felt by many SMEs to be a huge administrative burden.

One obligation according to the European Directive is the risk inventory that the companies should perform. For the SMEs this is a recurrent, time-consuming and complex procedure leading only to the definition of risks, while finding concrete measures to eliminate these risks requires another time-consuming search process.

The main objective of IMOSHION was to stimulate awareness of OSH issues in European SMEs and to support SMEs in their adherence of OSH through training, operation, planning and the design of workplaces. The project results provide low-cost and easy-to-use tools specifically designed for and with SMEs to help them manage OSH issues and provide long-term support for their businesses.

Specifically, the project objectives have been:

- 1) to improve access to information related to OSH regulation and to support the training of employees in OSH through an "OSH knowledge and learning management system"
- 2) to help SMEs improve their reaction to critical OSH issues by use of a "workplace simulation tool"
- 3) to make users of machine equipment aware of OSH issues related to production and maintenance by use of an "immersive training and learning tool"; and
- 4) to design OSH sound work environments by use of "work station and work place planning tools".

These four objectives were met as seen during the results, feedback and conclusions obtained at the final conference. In addition, the consortium managed to exceed these objectives by providing a ready-to-use, competitive and attractive toolset that SMEs and participating organizations are looking forward to continue using.