



INTERNATIONAL MASTER ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

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The XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) was developed in Frankfurt, Germany from August 24th to 27th. This event takes place every three years, each time in a different country; this time in Germany.

The main objective of the ILO for the World Congress 2014 was to organize a Global Forum of Prevention, for the exchange of knowledge, sharing and discussing practice and experience of the participants from countries and enterprises worldwide, in the development and implementation of prevention programs to promote safety and health at work for the reduction of occupational accidents and diseases. Other goals of the event were:

- To reinforce and build networks and alliances while laying the groundwork for cooperation and strengthening relationships among all concerned.
- To provide a platform for the development of knowledge and strategic and practical ideas that can be put into use immediately (1).

The Congress was organized by the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the support of the International Social Security Association (ISSA).

The Congress also received sponsorship from important enterprises like Siemens, Dräger, Secumundi, RWE AG, International SOS, MSA Safety, among others.



The motto of the 2014 World Congress was “Sharing a Vision for Sustainable Prevention”. The motto characterized the three main topics addressed by the Technical Sessions of the Congress (2):

1. Prevention Culture – Prevention Strategies – Vision Zero: a world in which people work safely and healthily and in which they are protected against serious or fatal occupational accidents.
2. Challenges in Occupational Health
3. Diversity in the World of Work

This was the biggest World Congress on Safety and Health at Work ever done. There were four days, attended by almost 4000 specialists on occupational health and safety, politicians and scientists from 143 different countries, who analyzed and discussed the different ways to make work more safe and healthy (3).

The main element of the program were six specialized sessions. Moreover, 30 symposia were performed with the focus on current aspects of safety and health at work, with highlights, stimulating discussions, visual impressions and interactive offerings. An international Media Festival for Prevention was also performed.

Additionally, an extraordinary and large exhibition with thousands of posters of specialists and enterprises from all over the world was presented. Impressive diversity was shown, which made it possible to encounter experts with similar interests and share experiences and knowledge on the topics addressed. The exhibition was divided into ten areas with great variety of topics of different sectors of the industry, as well as education, science, technology, alternative energy, and more; all of them regarding aspects of safety and health.

As expected, the Congress included a broad commercial area with innovative ideas such as special trucks for training in remote areas, radars and camera systems for large bulldozers and tractors to prevent accidents in mining, exercise machines for office desks in order to do exercise while working seated, and much



more. For me, attending the XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work was a unique experience. It was the first time I went to a World Congress of OSH and also the first time I saw so many OSH professionals together in one place. I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from Peru and also from other countries who work in the same field.

It was also great to meet again a teacher of mine, the first person who taught me about ergonomics. He was participating in a symposium presenting his experience on the implementation of a healthy lifestyle program at a mine in Colombia.

It was a surprise for me to meet a friend of the first Summer School of Munich I attended, a friend from Europe with whom I have contact by Facebook, but it was great to find him at the Congress.

One of the activities I really enjoyed (apart from the Congress and visiting Frankfurt) was the task we had as Master students of the LMU of attending the LMU's stand and promoting the Master Program to the participants of the Congress. I found this activity really fine; I had the opportunity of sharing my experience in the Master Program with other people, to meet and of course, to invite many Latin Americans to take part of this program.

I cannot fail to mention the great German night we were hosted by the Congress organizers. We spent a great time knowing each other tasting traditional German food, dancing and trying a bit of Frankfurter beer.

A world without serious accidents was the request of the organizers of the XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work at the end of the event. We left back Frankfurt toward Munich, feeling how lucky we were of having the opportunity to have attended the Congress, and hoping to be again one day at one of these events and in Frankfurt as well.



References:

1. International Labour Organization Website. XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2014 [Internet]. ILO Brussels; 2014 [cited 2014 Oct 14]. Available from: http://www.ilo.org/brussels/meetings-and-events/WCMS_183012/lang--en/index.htm
2. XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2014 Website. About [Internet]. Frankfurt: XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work; 2014 Aug 29 [cited 2014 Oct 25]. Available from: <https://www.safety2014germany.com/en/about/about.html>
3. XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2014 Website. We love prevention. [Internet]. Frankfurt: XX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work; 2014 Aug 29 [cited 2014 Oct 25]. Available from: <http://live.safety2014germany.com/2014/08/29/we-love-prevention-2/>