



Occupational Health & Safety Authority

## Media Release

### Competitiveness influenced by Occupational Health and Safety

03.03.08

A low level of occupational health and safety can have negative consequences on competitiveness at both the national and enterprise level.

A study conducted by the World Economic Forum and the International Labour Organisation (ILO/SafeWork) which compared the competitiveness of 31 industrial and developing countries clearly shows that better safety and health standards equal better national productivity (Fig. 1).

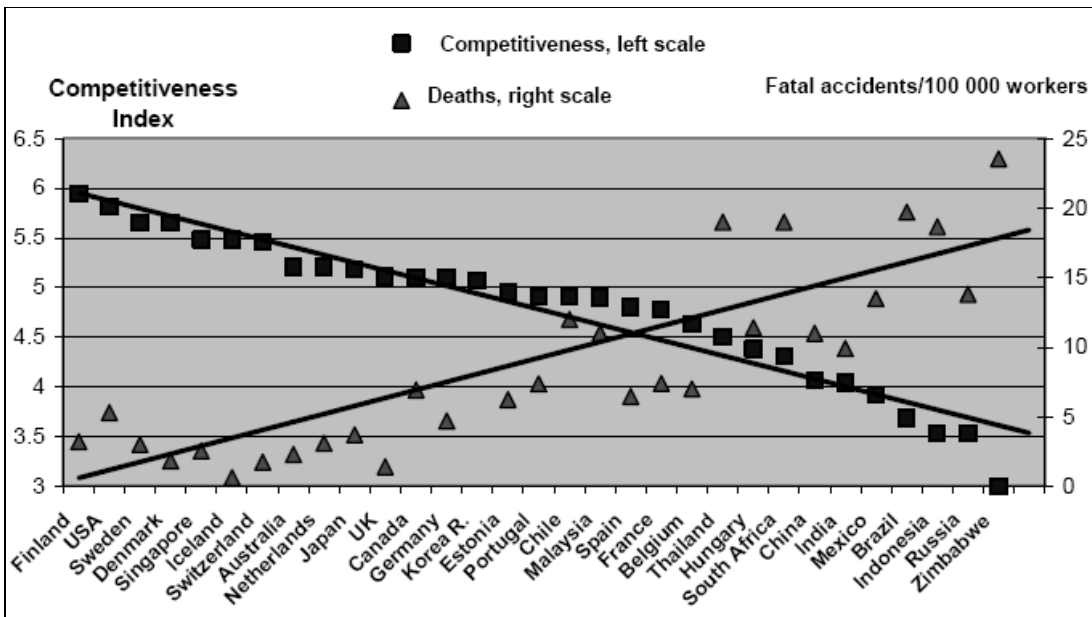
The results indicate that a low number of fatal occupational accidents and high competitiveness are directly proportional making the most competitive economies register the lowest number of fatal accidents.

Countries such as Switzerland, with just over 3 fatal occupational accidents per 100,000 employees, are not only amongst the best countries with the highest standards of occupational health and safety, but are also amongst the most competitive national economies in the world.

Based on this study, Malta, with an average annual fatality index of 4.6, would indicate a lower competitive index than a number of EU member states, demonstrating that there is still room for improvement in this sector.

The ILO further argues that a high level of occupational health and safety (OHS) should also be prevalent in the informal economy since there is evidence that even here, it also gives a positive contribution to productivity.

Fig. 1 Competitiveness and Safety



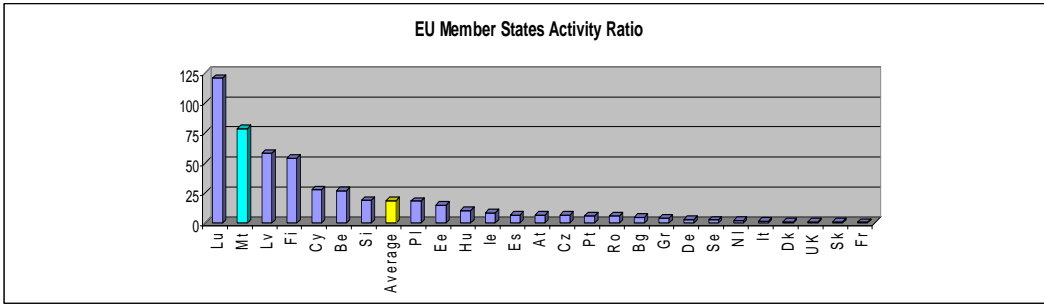
Sources: World Economic Forum; ILO/SafeWork

### OHS Information Accessed Online

During the course of last year, Malta scored second amongst the countries accessing information relating to occupational health and safety from the website of the European Agency for Safety and Health at work, second only to Luxembourg (Fig. 2). These figures were obtained using a formula that takes into consideration the size of the country and the level of internet penetration. This clearly shows that there is a greater awareness about occupational health and safety in Malta and that apart from requesting information by phone or email, people are accessing information on-line as well.

**Deleted:** Source: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2008.¶

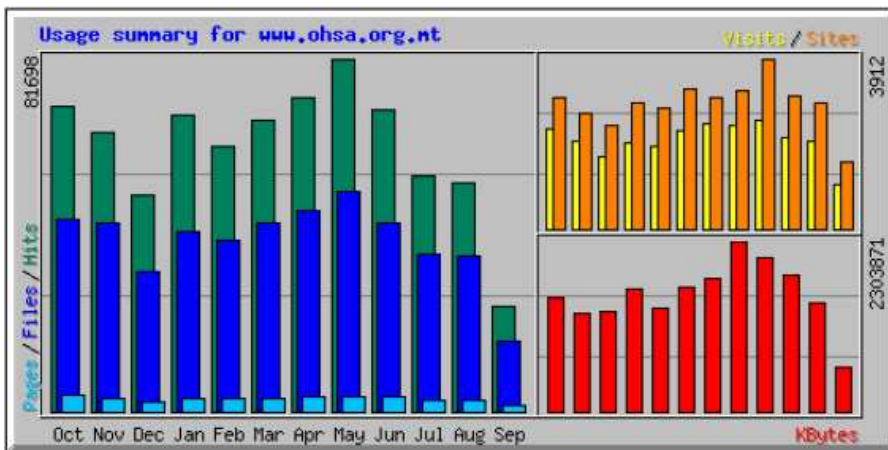
Fig. 2



Source: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

These results compliment others obtained by the Maltese Occupational Health and Safety Authority which also maintains its own website with a myriad of information ([www.ohsa.org.mt](http://www.ohsa.org.mt)). Visits to this website also mirror the trends noted in the European Agency's study and the great demand for information prevalent on the island. Indeed, in the period October 2006 to September 2007, a total of 738,000 hits were registered by the Maltese website, giving an average of more than 2,000 hits daily (fig. 3). The number of hits augmented by 160,000 over the same period the previous year indicating clearly that this tool is being utilised extensively.

Fig. 3



'We are very happy that people are requesting information since it shows a clearer interest in the subject. This augurs well for the country, its industries and employees since as proved by the ILO report mentioned earlier, there is a direct link between a good standard of OHS and competitiveness,' Dr Mark Gauci, the Authority's Chief Executive said.

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'As we have re-iterated many times, it is only through a concerted effort that we can register clear progress in putting occupational health and safety high on both the national and individual agenda,' Dr Gauci concluded.

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