

AUSTRIA

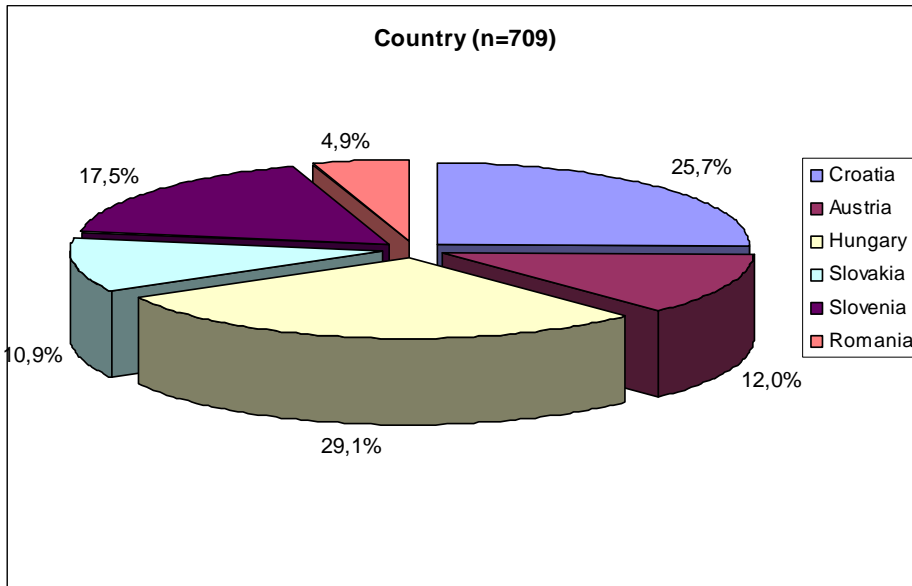
RESULTS OF THE IOSHA SURVEY



Employer survey results

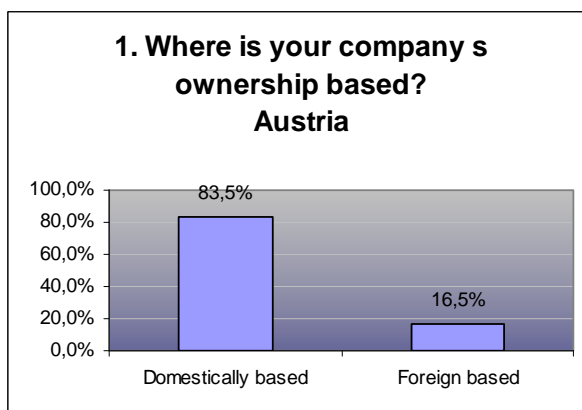
Corporate characteristics and economic situation:

The employer questionnaire that was sent to 500 companies in Austria, was filled in by 85 company representatives, which means a response ratio of 17%. That is the highest response ratio among the six countries. According to the data presented on Graph 1 Hungary ranks first in terms of the total number of completed questionnaires, while Austria takes the fourth place among the six countries.

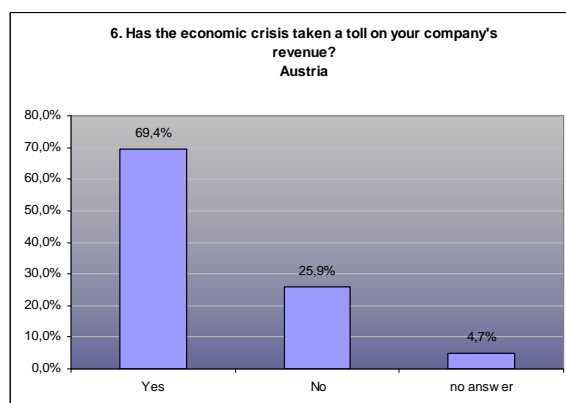


Graph 1: country distribution of survey completion

The majority of the companies completing the questionnaire are in Austrian ownership, only 16.5% are in foreign hands (Graph 2), most of them were founded before 1990 (Graph 3).



Graph 2: company ownership distribution



Graph 3: company foundation date distribution

Many companies belong to the category (67.1%), in which the number of employees exceeds 200. In the survey companies that employ 200-999 employees represent the highest ratio (47.1%) (Table 1). Most of the questions were answered by HR managers (Table 2).

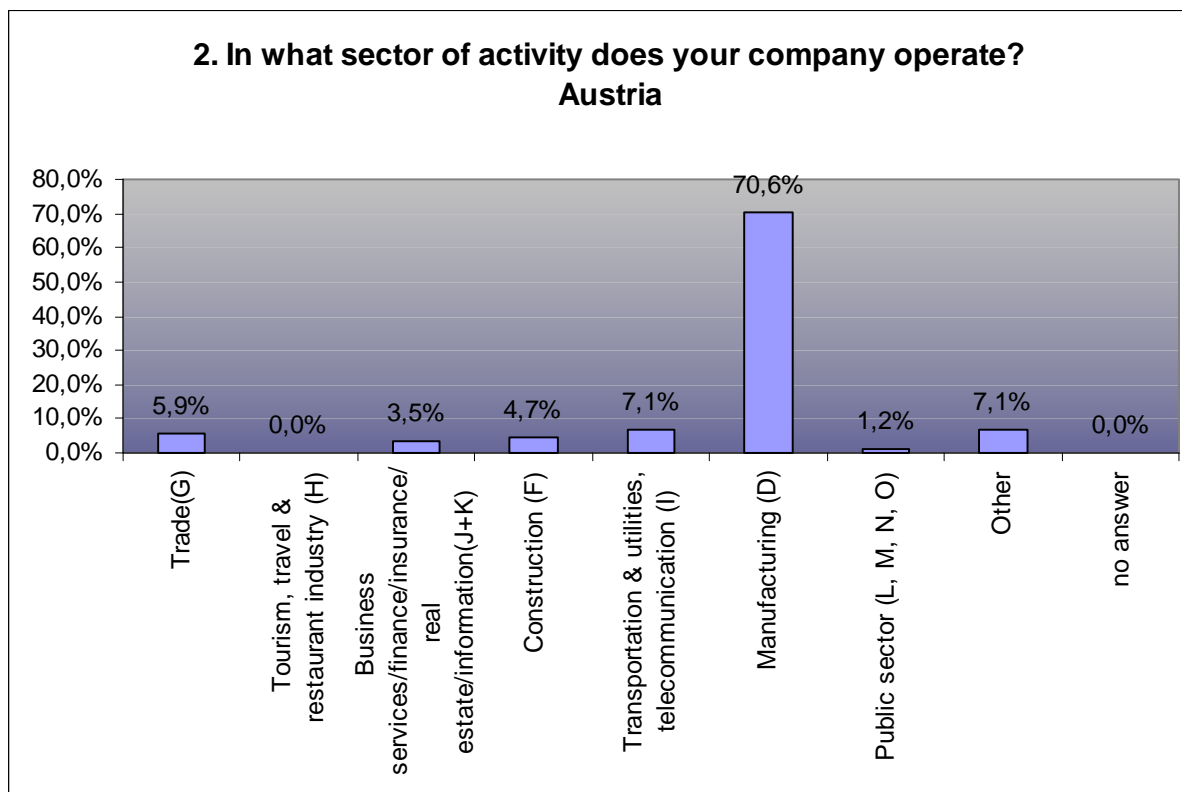
Table 1

4. Number of Employees	
	Austria
10-49	4,7%
50-99	5,9%
100-199	22,4%
200-999	47,1%
1000-4999	10,6%
5000-9999	4,7%
10000 or more	4,7%
no answer	
Total	100,0%

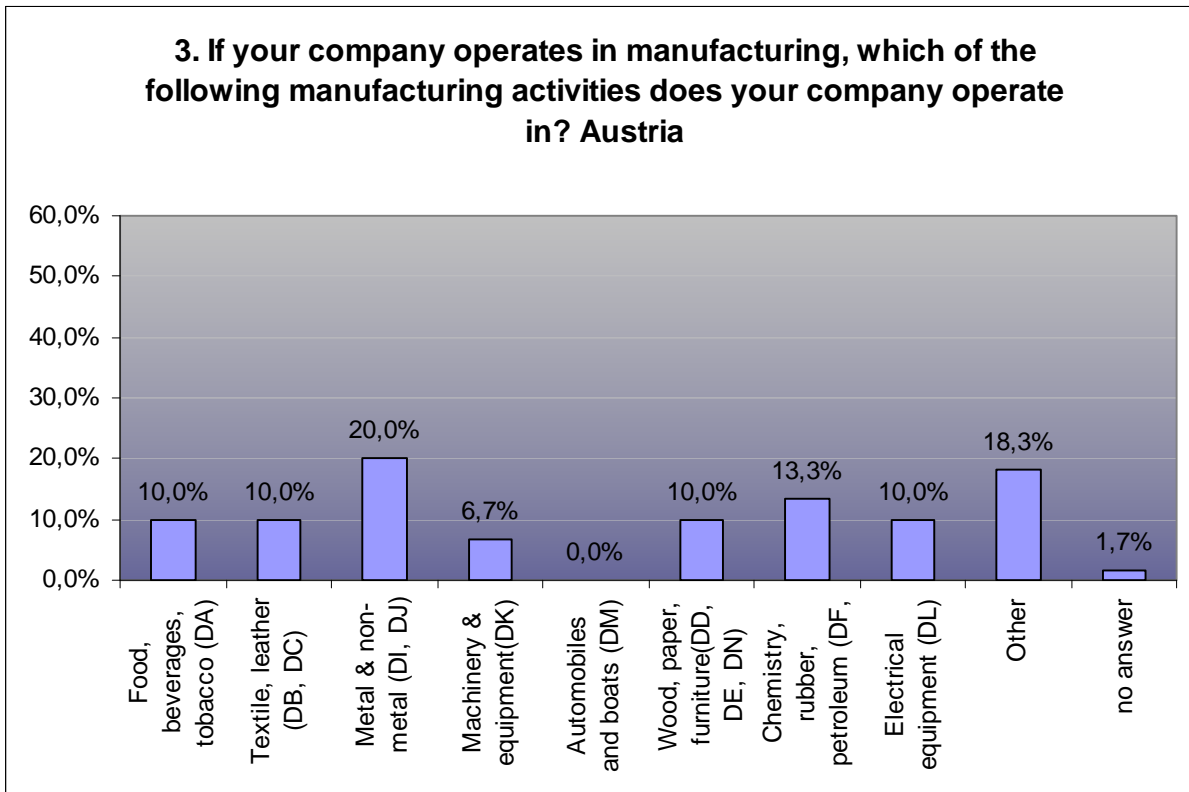
Table 2

9. Which of the following best describes your own position in the company?	
	Austria
Leading manager / director / owner	12,9%
HR manager / responsible for hiring, managing employees and pay related issues	44,7%
OSH manager	21,2%
Other	10,6%
no answer	10,6%
Total	100,0%

Most of the companies (70.6%) operate in the manufacturing sector (Graph 4). Within the manufacturing sector mainly the metal & non-metal industry and chemistry-rubber-petroleum industry are represented (20 and 13.3%, respectively) (Graph 5).

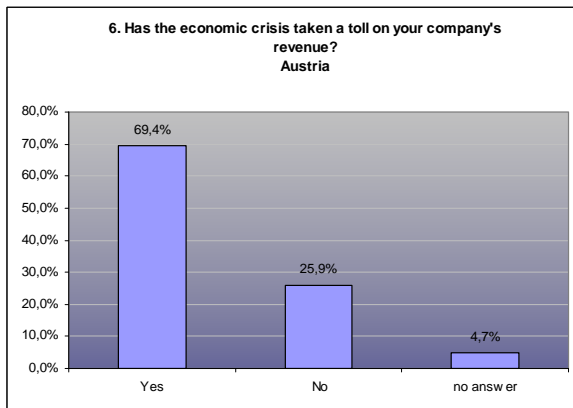


Graph 4: company activity sector distribution

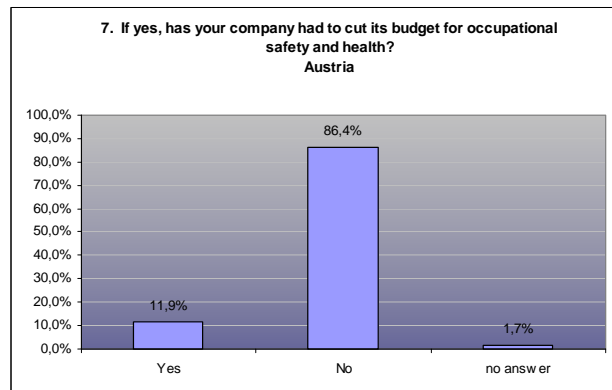


Graph 5: distribution of the types of manufacturing activities in which manufacturing companies operate

69.4% of the companies experienced a decrease in revenue caused by the economic crisis (Graph 6), but only 11.9% of those companies cut their budget for occupational safety and health (Graph 7).

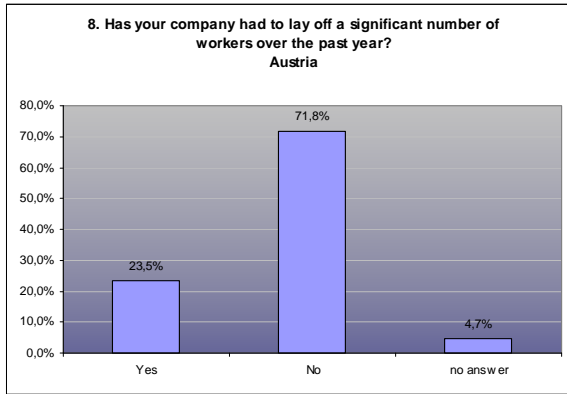


Graph 6: rate of the effect of the economic crisis on company revenue



Graph 7: rate of the effect of the economic crisis on the budget for occupational health and safety

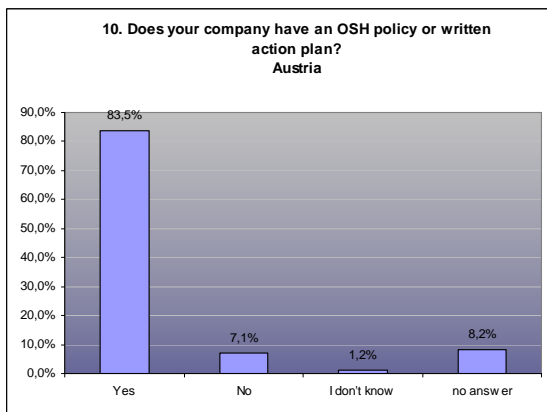
Despite the decline in revenue, which widely affected the firms, only 23.5% of the companies needed to lay off a significant number of employees while 71.8% of them did not take such steps over the past year (Graph 8).



Graph 8: frequency of lay-offs of a significant number of workers over the past year

Corporate OSH policy:

The basic condition for the efficient operation of a company is the planned and systematic way of thinking, in which the developed standard procedures play a major role. It remains a question, however, whether the OSH field is operated under similar conditions at companies or actions are based on rather ad hoc decisions. 83.5% of the companies have an OSH policy or written action plan and only 7.1% of them said that they don't have such a document on organizational level (Graph 9). These companies have not prepared such documentations because they either don't see any advantage of it, or they lacked the time for it (Table 3).



Graph 9: frequency of the existence of company OSH policy and written action plans

Table 3

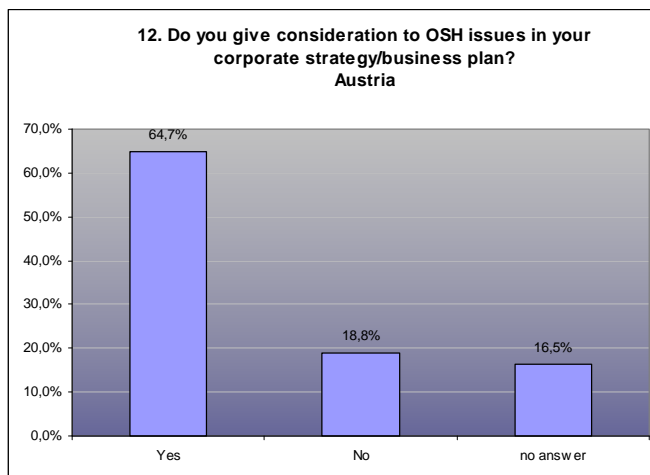
11. If not, is there any reason why the company hasn't implemented any such policy or plan?	
	Austria
We don't see the advantages to it	33,3%
There's been no time to prepare it	16,7%
We don't have anyone who's qualified to prepare it	
We don't have the necessary financial resources	
We don't consider it important for labour protection	16,7%
no answer	33,3%
Total	100,0%

54.1% of the companies operate a quality control system based on occupational health and safety, while 63.5% operate an environmental management system. 8.2% haven't introduced such a system (Table 4).

Table 4

17. Does your company operate any of the following quality-control systems?	
	Austria
Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems	54,1%
Environmental Management System	63,5%
No	8,2%
no answer	18,8%

The setup of the system already requires additional thought on the issue, but management attitude towards the OSH field that affects the company's future and operations is an equally important aspect. 64.7% of company managers take OSH into consideration when preparing company strategy and business plans, while only 18.8% don't (Graph 10). 35.3% of them bring up OSH questions on company management meetings, but 41.2% of them deal with them only occasionally. 8.3% of companies rarely or never discuss occupational safety and health issues at their management meetings (Table 5).

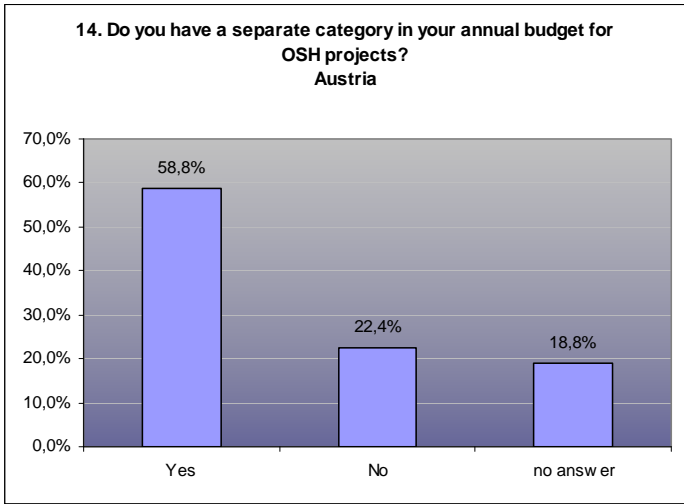


Graph 10: frequency of OSH consideration in corporate strategy and business plan

Table 5

13. Do OSH issues come up at management meetings?	
	Austria
Yes, frequently	35,3%
Yes, but just occasionally	41,2%
Rarely	7,1%
Never	1,2%
no answer	15,3%
Total	100,0%

To enable the undisturbed operation of OSH programs and processes, it is advisable to plan and separate a distinct category for OSH projects in the annual budget. In Austria 58.8% of the companies allocate and 22.4% don't allocate a financial budget for these tasks (Graph 11).



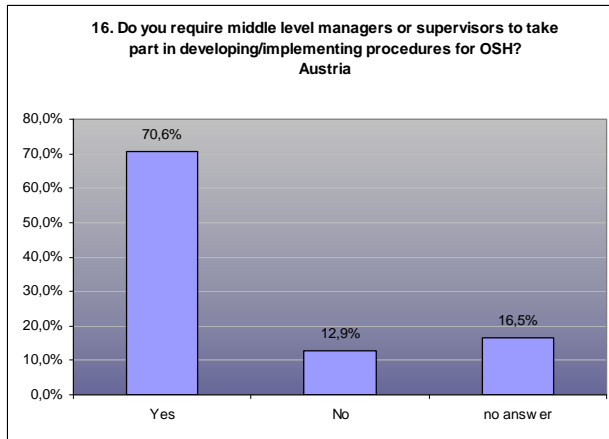
Graph 11: frequency of having a separate budget for OSH projects

According to reports the companies spend significant amounts on innovative solutions, development and research. But the question is how often innovations affect OSH issues at the firms. OSH appears entirely in innovative development planning at an impressive 42.4% of companies, at 37.6% it does only partially, and only at 3.5% it doesn't play a role at all (Table 6).

Table 6

15. How big role do OSH play in your planning of innovation projects?	
	Austria
A major role	42,4%
A secondary role	37,6%
No role at all	3,5%
no answer	16,5%
Total	100,0%

OSH processes must represent the interests of the employees protecting their health from occupational risks. The efficiency of the processes grows if the employees themselves are able to take part in planning and managing them on as many different levels as possible. The role of middle level management and supervisory staff is especially important. They are in direct relationship with the employees and – in case they have sufficient knowledge in the field – they are able to assist the development of employee consciousness with their care and communication. According to the answers, company management involves middle level managers and supervisors in the planning and execution of OSH processes at a high degree (Graph 12).



Graph 12: frequency of involving middle level managers or supervisors in the development/implementation of OSH procedures

Corporate OSH monitoring processes:

The success of OSH processes depends on adequate process management, evaluation, constant corrections and impact assessments. Teamwork and brainstorming sessions of interested parties (employer, employee, experts) are needed to develop best practices at companies which occasionally means considering opposing opinions as well. Concerning OSH related strategic decisions directors consult labor safety managers at the highest percentage, followed by occupational health specialists or HR managers (Table 7). They are mostly asked to present data on workplace accident statistics, the number of sick leave days, and results of surveys on employee problems (Table 8). At question 18 it can be seen that the number of answers decreased. The ratio of avoiding the answer (22-27%) was stable until Q28.

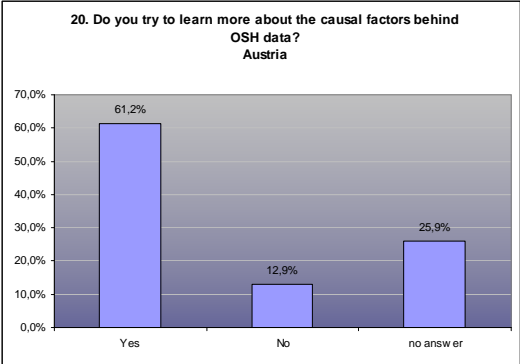
Table 7

18. Which of the following managers do you consult when developing strategies/procedures for occupational safety and health?	
	Austria
HR manager	45,9%
Labour safety manager	71,8%
Occupational health specialist	48,2%
None of the above	
Others	20,0%
no answer	22,4%

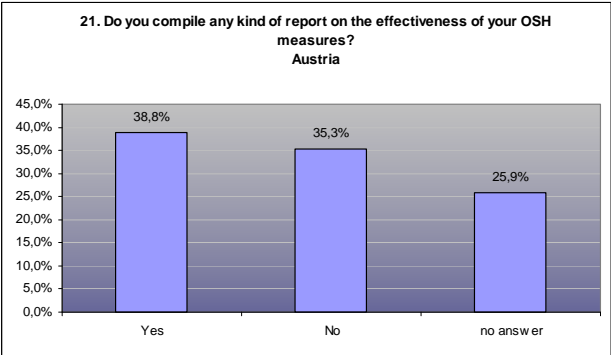
Table 8

19. What data do you use to monitor OSH processes at your company?	
	Austria
Number of sick leave days	50,6%
Workplace-accident statistics	71,8%
Surveys on employee problems	37,6%
A summary of worker requests/demands	16,5%
A compilation of worker health statistics	18,8%
Indicators of worker satisfaction/dissatisfaction	40,0%
no answer	24,7%

More than 60 % of the participating company managers ask for specialist opinion regarding the requested OSH data. 38.8% of them have, 35.3% do not have the results of OSH processes and programs analyzed and measured (Graph 13-14).



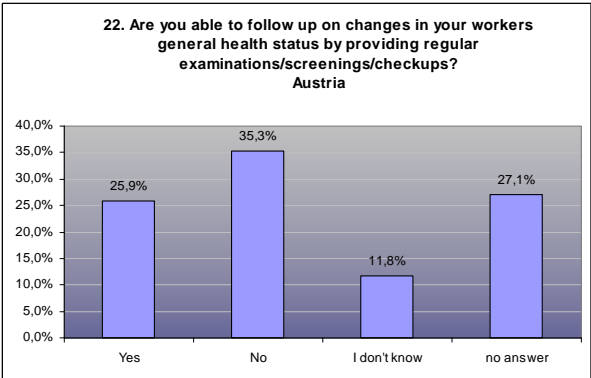
Graph 13: frequency of examination of the casual factors behind OSH data



Graph 14: frequency of reporting on the effectiveness of OSH measures

One fourth of the firms try to provide regular examinations, screenings and checkups for their employees so they are able to follow up on changes in their general health status. 35.3% don't provide such examinations, while another 11.8% are not familiar with these elements of the system (Graph 15).

A constant monitoring system to control the operation of OSH projects is present at the majority of the companies (41.1%). However 31.8% of them don't operate such systems (Table 9).



Graph 15: possibility to follow up on the health status of workers by providing regular examinations/screenings/checkups

Table 9

23. Do you have a monitoring system to control the operation of OSH projects?	
	Austria
Yes, based upon qualitative data-collection methods	8,2%
Yes, based upon quantitative data-collection methods	9,4%
Yes, based upon both qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods	23,5%
No	31,8%
no answer	27,1%
Total	100,0%

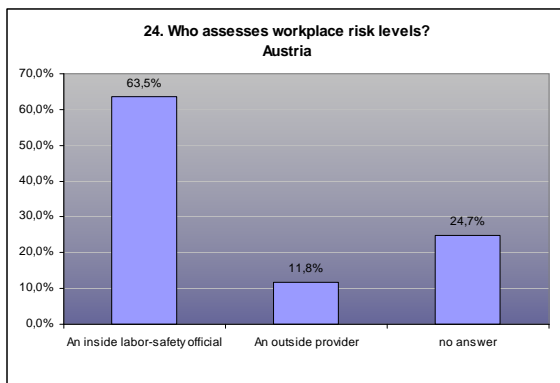
OSH risk assessment:

All companies own a tool that they are obliged by law to prepare, which is the workplace risk assessment process. With the help of this tool companies are able to monitor workplace risk factors, which may endanger the employees' health and safety. In the case of a proper preparation of risk assessment, using qualitative tools and data taken from an adequate sample, the real problems and the real situation can be found. This is the first step to find problem-driven and well-planned solutions.

Outside experts do not always meet the general problems affecting the company and they do not necessarily see inside company procedures, they can only present partial data on the situation.

At more than 63.5% of the companies their inside labor safety specialist carries out the risk assessment procedure and only 11.8% of the companies use outside experts to do the job (Graph 16).

According to the survey 62.4% of experts collect data for workplace risk assessment with site audits and equally in 31.8% qualitative and quantitative measurements are also used for the process (Table 10).

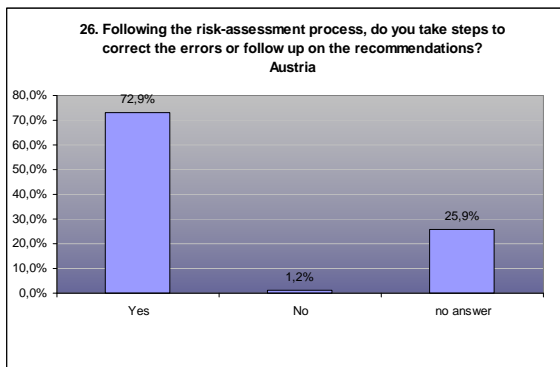


Graph 16: the rate of inside and outside labor-safety providers assessing workplace risk levels

Table 10

25. What methods are used to measure risk to prepare the general risk assessment documentation?	
	Austria
Qualitative measurements	31,8%
Quantitative measurements	31,8%
Site audits	62,4%
no answer	29,4%

After finishing the risk assessment procedure the majority of companies (72.9%) take appropriate steps in order to correct their mistakes and solve the upcoming problems (Graph 17). Answer avoidance grew with another 5% at Q26.

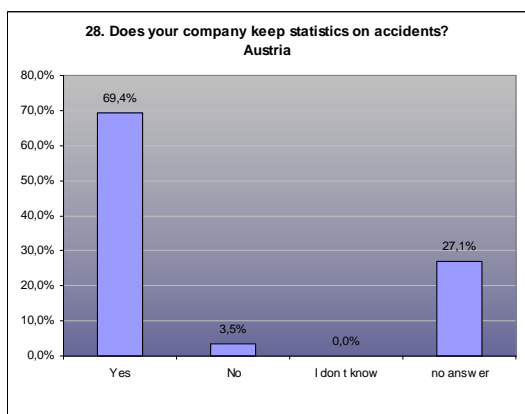


Graph 17: frequency of taking steps to correct the errors following the risk-assessment process

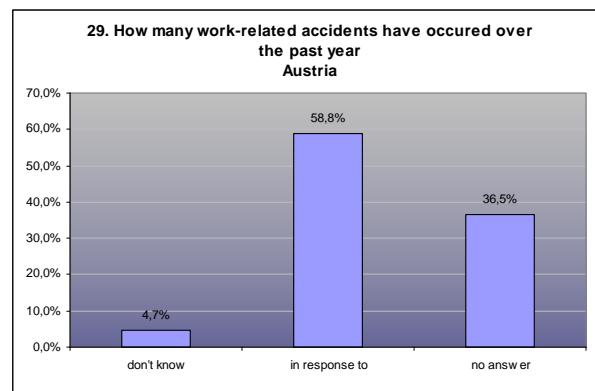
Table 11

27. If not, is there any reason why you don't take action on the risk assessments findings?	
Austria	
There's nobody to perform such a task	
It would be too expensive or take too much time	100,0%
It's not necessary because the risk-assessment doesn't highlight any major shortcomings	
Legal regulations are far too complex	
no answer	
Total	100,0%

69.4% of those filling out the questionnaire keep statistics on accidents and 3.5% do not register workplace accidents at the company at all (Graph 18). From those who keep statistics, 53% answered that it is possible to evaluate and that the number of accidents/year in average in their case is 22.75 (the standard deviation is 65.88 – min. 0, max. 433 cases/year). The standard deviation is extremely high due to very big differences in the sizes of the companies. The number of those who did not answer was high (36.5%) and stagnated until the last question. Only 4.7% admitted not to be able to answer the question (Graph 19). Typically at companies accidents are non-critical (85.3%), while serious, but curable accidents occur in 10.7%, and accidents causing permanent damage represent 0.5% (Table 11).



Graph 18: frequency of companies that keep statistics on accidents

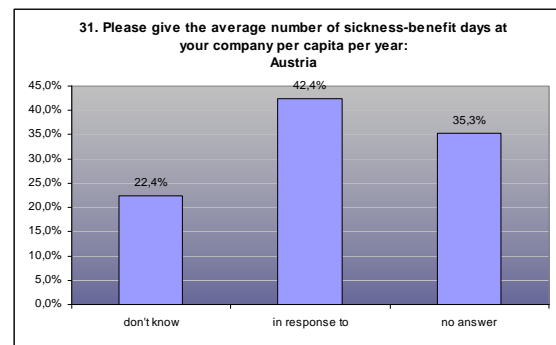


Graph 19: number of work accidents over the past year

The other frequently used measurement – besides statistics on accidents – is the number of sick-leave days. 42.4% of the managers gave an answer to the question, but only 39% of the answers were valid. The sickness-benefit days at these companies are in average 8.48 days/person/year (the standard deviation is 4.38). 22.4% couldn't give an answer (Graph 20).

Table 12

30. Please identify the percentage distribution of workplace accidents by degree of seriousness		
		Austria
Non-critical accidents	Mean	85,3
	Std Deviation	27,56
Serious, but curable accidents	Mean	10,7
	Std Deviation	21,96
Accidents that cause permanent damage	Mean	0,5
	Std Deviation	1,77
Lethal accidents	Mean	0,0
	Std Deviation	0,10



Graph 20: rate of companies identifying the average number of sickness-benefit days (days/person/year)

Current status of OSH:

Even if we find the correct management methods dealing with OSH issues there will be health problems that the employees need to deal with. All risk factors cannot be managed at work, since the lifestyle an employee leads out of the workplace is a personal choice. Certain company, management and environmental factors – especially if they describe a sample unanimously – may cause acute or chronic symptoms and diseases. It is advisable therefore, to assess from time to time the type of health problems employees suffer from at a given workplace. Managers completing the survey found that musculoskeletal and stress caused problems are the most serious. According to the observation of those managers their employees suffer the least from workplace-safety and lifestyle problems (Table 13).

The next question explores the kind of OSH programs the companies have spent on most frequently in the last two years.

Table 13

32. What kinds of problems have the employer noticed among your workers?	
	Austria
Problems with stress	40,0%
Musculoskeletal problems	47,1%
Lifestyle problems	3,5%
Attitude problems	12,9%
Communication problems	16,5%
Social problems	15,3%
Workplace-safety problems	4,7%
Workers in poor health	4,7%
Aging worker population	22,4%
Loss of concentration	8,2%
Alcohol problems	5,9%
Unsatisfactory work environment	5,9%
Smoking	24,7%
Ear/eye problems	10,6%
I don't know of any	3,5%
None exist	1,2%
no answer	34,1%

Table 14

33. Over the past two years, which of the following programs has your company implemented?	
	Austria
Basic medical screenings / Extra screenings	36,5%
Knowledge-development training sessions	27,1%
Workplace well-being programs	32,9%
Community programs, events	32,9%
Workplace-safety developments	32,9%
Improvement/Upgrade of tools, machinery rooms	32,9%
Renovation/Modernization of work environment	34,1%
Offering flexible working hours	25,9%
Health programs	34,1%
Ergonomic improvements	42,4%
Specialist advice (i.e. medical, psychological advice)	41,2%
New or improved gym/fitness center	7,1%
New or improved company canteen	21,2%
Stress-management programs	15,3%
Safety equipment upgrade	30,6%
no answer	34,1%

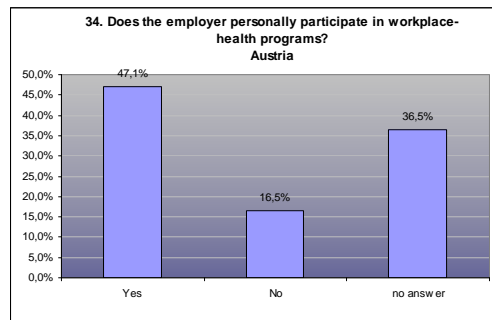
According to the results, the most favored expenditures in the last two years were for ergonomic improvements (42.4%), for specialist advice (41.2%) and for medical screenings (36.5%) (Table 14).

On the workplace health programs 47.1% of the management participated, thus setting a good example (Graph 21).

According to the results the outcome of the organized OSH programs was considered successful by 45.9% of employers who completed the questionnaire (Table 15).

Table 15

35. How successful were OSH programs mentioned in question 33.	
	Austria
Very successful	11,8%
Successful	45,9%
Not very successful	7,1%
Not successful at all	
no answer	35,3%
Total	100,0%



Graph 21: frequency of employer participation in workplace-health programs

OSH services are provided mainly by both in-house and outside services. Few companies used either an outside contractor, or in-house services exclusively (Table 16).

In the next question companies were asked if they have a rehabilitation program that helps workers return to work after long term sick leaves. 10.6% of the employers have such a rehabilitation program, the majority have not yet had one, but 32.9% find the idea a good one (Table 17).

Table 16

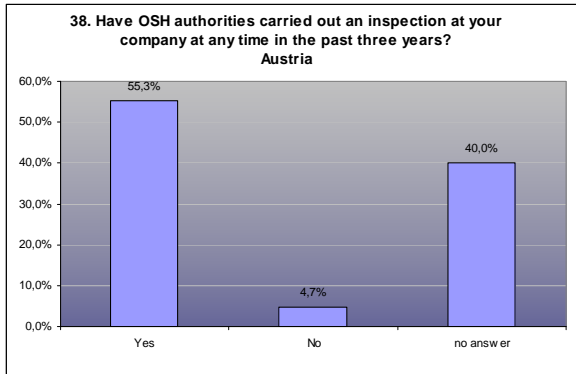
37. Does the company provide OSH services in-house, or through an outside contractor?	
	Austria
In-house services	2,4%
Outside services	3,5%
We use both	60,0%
None of them	
no answer	34,1%
Total	100,0%

Table 17

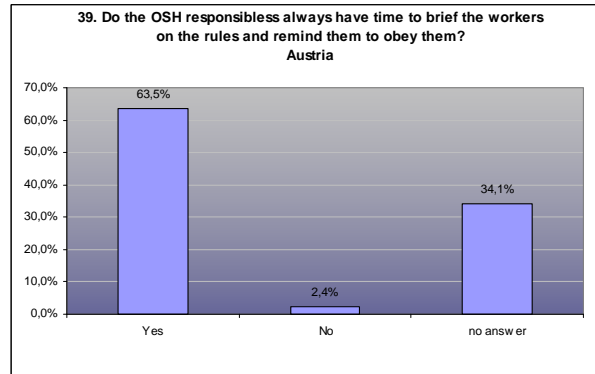
36. Does your company have a rehabilitation program that helps workers return to work following long term sick leaves?	
	Austria
Yes	10,6%
No, but it would be a good idea	32,9%
No	22,4%
no answer	34,1%
Total	100,0%

At most of the firms an inspection by OSH authorities had been carried out in the past three years, (Graph 22).

Almost all answering employers think that employees are warned by their OSH supervisors to keep to the rules and regulations, only 2.4% find that they don't always have the time for that (Graph 23).



Graph 22: frequency of OSH authorities inspection over the past three years



Graph 23: frequency of briefings of OSH supervisors on OSH rules

It is well known, that companies struggle with numerous problems in the field of OSH development, thus the companies' needs in the field were investigated. Table 18 shows a very large proportion of those avoiding the answer, but those who filled out the questionnaire would prefer greater societal support and government help through tax and social contribution reliefs.

Table 18

40. Which of the following measures would make it easier for the employer to implement OSH programs?	
	Austria
Tax write-offs	47,1%
Reduced health-insurance contributions	55,3%
Legislative action to support the development of such programs	21,2%
Educational improvements for specialists	11,8%
Greater societal awareness/support	60,0%
no answer	76,5%

Besides the legislative background we were also curious to find out about the future plans of the companies for process development. According to the results, most employers do plan some developments in the near future, with emphasis on increasing the motivation of employees (Table 19).

Table 19

41. Does the company/employer plan to take any of the following steps to develop OSH procedures?	
	Austria
Creating a separate budget entry for such programs, or allocating more funds to them	12,9%
Allowing for flexible work hours	16,5%
Expanding the workforce: creating a new position to oversee OSH issues	
Expanding the workforce: enlarging the relevant departments to include OSH duties	1,2%
Improving motivation for OSH specialists	23,5%
Improving employee motivation	42,4%
Because of the economic crisis, we can only consider proposals that will allow our company to realize short-term profit	5,9%
No such plans	5,9%
no answer	40,0%