

Professional risk management: analysis of offer for external authorized services of prevention and protection in two Romanian counties

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Abstract: - Ensuring occupational safety and health through effective professional risk management (by using a qualified staff, specifically trained and certified for handle the associated risks, by prevention and protection activities) represents one of the main requirements that any business must comply now in Romania, according to the European Union (EU) directives and national regulations in the field. This may be a considerable entrepreneurship opportunity, especially in times of crisis, when the scarcity of financial resources of the existing business companies seems to justify the externalization of services for prevention and protection against work related risks. On these considerations, our paper presents the results of a comparative analysis concerning the offer for such external authorized services that currently cover two neighbor Romanian counties: Hunedoara and Gorj. These results reveal a series of aspects from which we can draw meaningful conclusions about the current developments and future directions for improving the actions in the field, according to the renewed EU strategy for sustainable growth.

Key-Words: - Occupational safety and health, professional risk management, protection and prevention services

1 Background: National Legislative Framework

One of the goals imposed by conditions that must be met nowadays for any business is to create a favorable work environment for employees [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Accomplishing this goal is not easy, but is possible through an effective professional risk management which involves a multitude of activities (from identifying all risks specific to each work place, up to finding and applying adequate measures/concrete actions for prevention and reduction the impact of occupational diseases and accidents) [7], [8], [9], [10], [11]. In other words, professional risks management is closely related to the prevention and protection activities supposed by occupational safety and health (OSH) and should be developed in a general systemic framework able to integrate all organizational basic units - at all integration levels and in the entire organization [12, p. 32].

In Romania, according to the Law No. 319/2006 of work safety and health [13] (complemented by Government Decision 1425/2006 for approving the methodological norms of applying the Law) [14],

every economic agent must plan, organize and manage all prevention and protection activities.

The responsibility for accomplishing these activities may be assumed by the employer himself, only in certain conditions (if the size and potential occupational risks of the respective business are not significant). Else, the employer must designate employees responsible for such activities, or must organize an internal service for prevention and protection, represented by a health and safety committee (in the case of business with high potential risk, or those having more than fifty employees). But, generally, the most part of Romanian economic agents do not have employees with the requested authorized/certified qualifications to realize prevention and protection activities. Consequently, they can use external specialized services, with condition that these are to respect the legislative norms.

Thus, according to Government Decision 1425/2006, external prevention and protection services are annually authorized by a committee organized within the Territorial Labor Inspectorate (ITM) in whose area the respective service will operate ([14], Articles 35-45).

Also, managers of the services and all their employees must cumulatively fulfill the conditions for doing all thirty-four prevention and protection activities stipulated by Law 319/2006 [13]. But, it is important to mention that external services may be asked to do one, some or all the activities aiming health and safety stipulated by Law.

Existence of external prevention and protection services is highly important, irrespective of the activity domain, because these are the ones to ensure, most times, identification and assessment of occupational risks and proposal of measures for continuous activity improvement within any company. This is the reason why an analysis of prevention and protection external services situation proves to be useful and relevant.

2 The Comparative Analysis of Offer for External Services of Prevention and Protection in Hunedoara and Gorj Counties

Accomplishing the thirty-four prevention and protection activities stipulated by Law 319/2006 is necessary for risks management. If employers choose to appeal to external prevention and protection services, these services will do some or all the activities, depending on the employer's needs and requests. To perform these activities, external services must be authorized. Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection (MMFPS) provides a list of all authorized providers of such services in Romania [15].

The methodology of the paper consists in documentary and comparative statistical analysis. Thus, MMFPS systematizes external services by several criteria: county, owner, address, Unique Registration Code (CUI), registration number in the Trade Register, certificate number and date of empowerment, name and surname of the external service manager, personal numeric code, and courses / vocational training providers in the field.

This type of systematizing data allowed a comparison of the situation in Gorj and Hunedoara counties.

Regarding the investigation area, all competent external services for prevention and protection from the counties of Hunedoara and Gorj were taken into account, with a total of 170 external services, of which 43 in Gorj County and 127 in Hunedoara County.

The criteria according to which analysis was performed have been: the sex of external services

managers, number of training courses graduated by them and professional training providers at which they have graduated these courses, as well as the headquarter location of service.

The main results are presented below.

2.1 “The sex of external services managers” criterion

In Gorj County, from all the forty-three external services managers, 18.6% are women (eight women) and 81.4% are men (35 men). The low proportion of women in this position can be observed.

In Hunedoara County the situation is not much more favorable in this respect. From the total of 127 external services managers, 17.32% are women (22 women) and 82.68% are men (105 men), fact that demonstrates that in both counties women are few regarding this field.

2.2 “Number of training courses graduated” criterion

In Gorj County, 17 external services managers graduated only one professional training course (39.53%), while 26 of them graduated two such courses (60.47%). It is observable that more than half of them graduated two professional training courses.

In Hunedoara County, only one external services leaders have no professional training course (0.79%), 20 graduated one (15.74%), 105 graduated two courses (82.68%) and only one external services managers graduated more than two professional training courses (0.79%). It appears that most of the external services managers in this county have graduated two vocational training courses in health and safety domain.

2.3 “Professional training providers at which external services managers graduated training courses in health and safety domain” criterion

Regarding Gorj County, data were systematized in Table 1. It can be seen that the main providers of professional training services elected by external services leaders are University of Petroșani (16 graduates leading external service for prevention and protection), „Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University Iasi (13), SC HIDROPROMED S.R.L. Târgu Jiu (7) and Professional Training Center of Labor Inspection (CPPPIM) Botoșani (6).

Table 1. Summary of providers of training courses graduated by managers of external services for prevention and protection - Gorj County

Professional training services providers	Number of external services leaders trained	
	Numerically	Percentage (%)
University of Petrosani	16	27,12
„Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University Iasi	13	22,04
S.C. HIDROPROMED S.R.L. Târgu Jiu	7	11,86
CPPPIM Botosani	6	10,17
„1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba-Iulia	4	6,78
”Politehnica” University of Timisoara	4	6,78
INCDPM Bucharest	3	5,09
„Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu	2	3,40
WEST University of Timisoara	1	1,69
S.C. HI-TO.MIZO PRIM S.R.L. Simian	1	1,69
S.C. HSEQ CONSULTING S.R.L. Ploiesti	1	1,69
S.C. EXPERT AUDIT S.R.L. Bucharest	1	1,69
TOTAL	59	100

An interesting aspect is that in Gorj County external protection and prevention services managers mostly chose to train themselves in universities (from the total of 59 courses graduated, 40 were graduated at universities), aspect highlighted in Fig. 1.

In Hunedoara County, the main professional training providers in health and security domain are MMSSF (84 graduates who lead external prevention and protection services), University of Petroșani (47), Polytechnic University of Timișoara (46) and „1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia (32), as shown in Table 2.

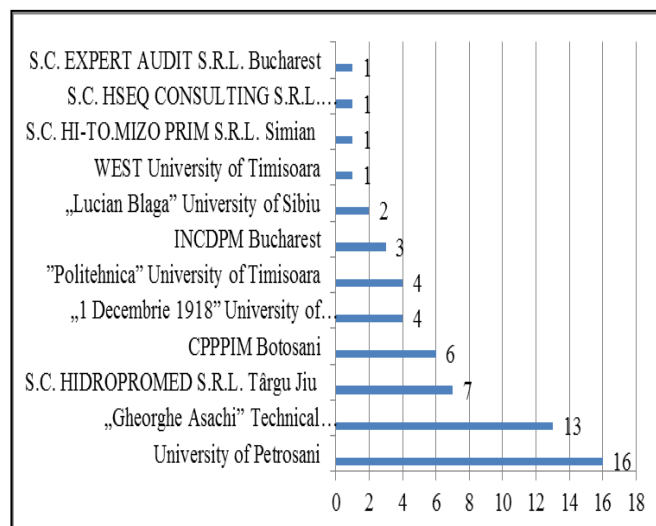


Fig. 1 Numerical structure of courses completed by the heads of external services of prevention and protection – Gorj County

Similar to the situation in Gorj County, in Hunedoara approximately half (57.83%) of authorized services leaders chose to be professionally trained in universities, the rest of them being trained in specialized institutions (CPPPIM, National Research and Development Institute on Occupational Safety (INCDPM), ITM) or appealing to firms specialized in this domain, fact also shown in Fig. 2.

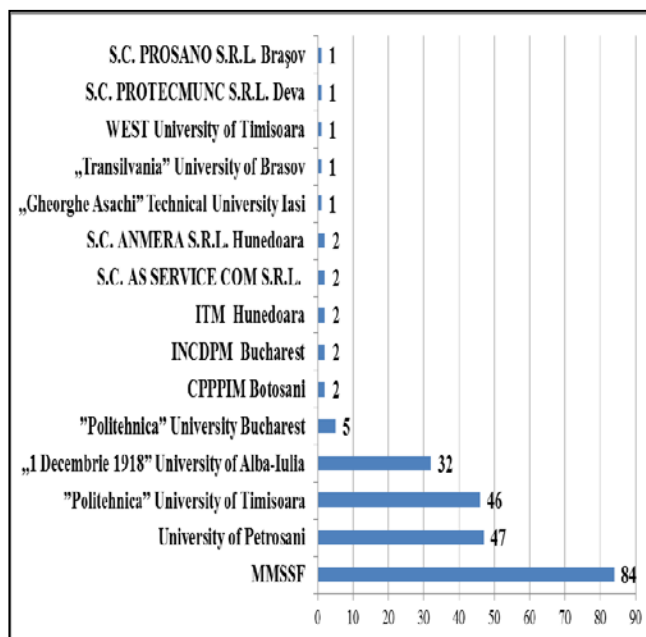


Fig. 2 Numerical structure of courses completed by managers of external services of prevention and protection – Hunedoara County

Table 2. Summary of providers of vocational training courses graduated by managers of external services for prevention and protection - Hunedoara County

Professional training services providers	Number of external services leaders trained	
	Numerically	Percentage (%)
MMSSF	84	36,53
University of Petrosani	47	20,44
"Politehnica" University of Timisoara	46	20
„1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba-Iulia	32	13,92
"Politehnica" University Bucharest	5	2,18
CPPPIM Botosani	2	0,87
INCDPM Bucharest	2	0,87
ITM Hunedoara	2	0,87
S.C. AS SERVICE COM S.R.L.	2	0,87
S.C. ANMERA S.R.L. Hunedoara	2	0,87
„Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University Iasi	1	0,43
„Transilvania" University of Brasov	1	0,43
WEST University of Timisoara	1	0,43
S.C. PROTECMUNC S.R.L. Deva	1	0,43
S.C. PROSANO S.R.L. Braşov	1	0,43
S.C. H&S CONSULT S.R.L. Târgu Mures	1	0,43
TOTAL	230	100

2.4 Location criterion

Analyzing the locations of these external services, it was found that there is no uniformity of their distribution in space, but there are geographical points in which more or fewer services are concentrated. We note that in the county seats there is the highest concentration of external prevention and protection services. For Gorj County, the situation is shown in Table 3.

From the nine localities where these services are located, most of them are in Târgu Jiu (76.76%), the rest of them having one or two prevention and protection services. An important aspect is that in 2009, Gorj County had nine cities and

municipalities [16], [17], being observable the fact that almost all the services (90.7 %) are located in urban areas (Fig. 3).

Table 3. Locations of external prevention and protection services – Gorj County

Crt. No.	Locality	Authorized external services	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Târgu Jiu	33	76.76%
2.	Bumbeşti Jiu	2	4.66%
3.	Motru	2	4.66%
4.	Curtişoara	1	2.32%
5.	Târgu Cărbuneşti	1	2.32%
6.	Prigoria	1	2.32%
7.	Rovinari	1	2.32%
8.	Drăgoeni	1	2.32%
9.	Băleşti	1	2.32%
TOTAL		43	100%

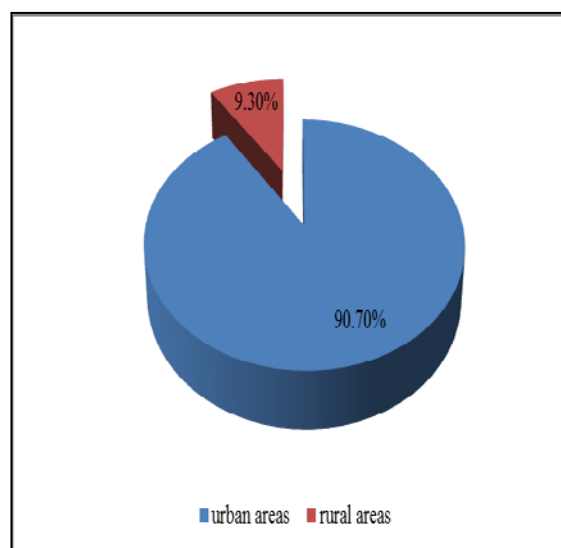


Fig. 3 The share of external prevention and protection services in urban and rural areas – Gorj County

In the case of Hunedoara County, the situation is shown in Table 4. This county includes seven cities, seven towns and fifty-five communes [16], [18]. From all of them, in all the seven cities, in six towns and in seven communes external authorized prevention and protection services are located. So, in Hunedoara County this type of services exists in urban areas as well as in rural areas, prevailing,

however, services from urban areas (119 services out of 127), as evidenced in Fig. 4.

Table 4. Locations of external prevention and protection services – Hunedoara County

Crt. No.	Locality	Authorized external services	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Deva	38	29.92%
2.	Petroșani	30	23.62%
3.	Hunedoara	18	14.16%
4.	Hațeg	6	4.72%
5.	Orăștie	5	3.94%
6.	Brad	5	3.94%
7.	Lupeni	5	3.94%
8.	Simeria	4	3.15%
9.	Vulcan	3	2.36%
10.	Petrita	2	1.57%
11.	București	2	1.57%
12.	Băița	1	0.79%
13.	Aninoasa	1	0.79%
14.	Crișcior	1	0.79%
15.	Dobra	1	0.79%
16.	Chimindia	1	0.79%
17.	Călan	1	0.79%
18.	Certeju de Sus	1	0.79%
19.	Râu de Mori	1	0.79%
20.	Uricani	1	0.79%
TOTAL		127	100%

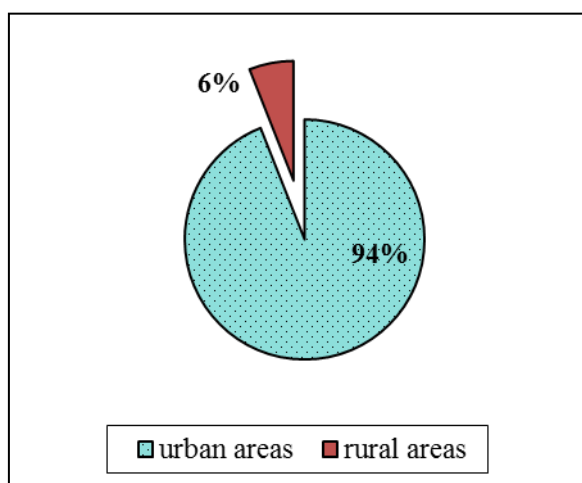


Fig. 4 The share of external prevention and protection services in urban and rural areas – Hunedoara County

4 Conclusions and Remarks

This analysis led to the following conclusions:

- ✓ Women have a small share in the total of external authorized prevention and protection services managers in both counties;
- ✓ More than half of the external authorized prevention and protection services managers analyzed in every county graduated two training courses in this domain;
- ✓ In Gorj County, 68.7% of external authorized prevention and protection services managers graduated two professional training courses in universities, while in Hunedoara County only 57.83% of them chose to professionally train in universities;
- ✓ University of Petroșani is one of the first options for professional training in both Gorj and Hunedoara Counties;
- ✓ The total number of external authorized prevention and protection services is much smaller in Gorj than in Hunedoara;
- ✓ In Hunedoara and Gorj Counties, the external prevention and protection services are located mainly in the urban area but they are also found in rural areas.

To improve some aspects noted in the analysis here are some recommendations:

- To increase the representativity of women in this field "family-friendly" social policies may be adopted, with the purpose to reduce the difficulty caused by the psychological conflict generated by women's necessity to choose between family and career [19], [20];
- Encouraging external services managers for continuous professional development;
- Development of external authorized prevention and protection services in rural areas.

In Romania, as in European Union, the safety and health of employees are protected by Law and supported by professional risk management - a managerial approach based on assessing and preventing risk at work. For effectively managing professional risk, both employers and employees need to know the legislative framework, concepts underlying the rules and methods for work risk assessment, and the role to be played by the actors involved in this process [21], [22]. Risk assessment allows them to take the necessary measures and to act accordingly, for developing organizational structures and systems able to sustain the properly informing and training of employees, prevention of occupational disease and accidents.

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