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**CULTURAL ASPECTS OF WORK
WITHIN EUROPE**

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ABSTRACT

The study was performed during Europhamili session III, which took place in Lodz, Poland during April - June in 2004 by trainees, representatives of Macedonia, Moldova and Lithuania. The purpose of this study is to discover the anthropology of word "work", its perception in the societies and dimensions at different periods of the history. Besides, to cover all possible present meanings of word "work" and appreciate the similarities and differences of those meanings, values, attitudes of work among our own languages. We put special stress on the issues related to work, like unemployment, it's implication on health of the population and the way societies deal with it.

Based on the descriptive information from three languages and countries we tried to compare "work" and things related to it in our countries.

Key words: culture, employer, labour force, language, improvement, health, motivation, work definitions, work attitudes, values, unemployment.

INTRODUCTION

To illustrate the cultural peculiarities, similarities and differences of words' meaning we received the task for. The word "work" was an exercise to question the meaning, society values, and attitudes in our own languages as well as to compare.

Presently within enlarging European Union and diminishing of the borders inside the Community where countries are still going to keep their languages, traditions and customs, it is important to make population sensitive to the possible differences in words meanings. This is particular important for the labour force movement inside European Union. Besides linguistic meaning, even within neighboring countries perceptions, treating and value of the same word can be completely different. It is important to be aware of such differences, respect them and treat the meaning of the word.

To make us be able to see other's things as they see, and to look at our own - as others can see them – is the purpose of this intercultural work.

BACKGROUND

DEFINITIONS OF THE WORK

Questions continue to arise concerning the definition of the "work".

"Work" could be defined as meaning the performance of services for which remuneration is payable. But "work" need not be limited only to services performed in an employer-employee relationship; individuals in self-employment also may be considered to be performing "work". The "work" performed in self-employment must, however, be bona fide "work"; it does not, for example, include unremunerative work performed as a volunteer. In determining whether "work" is performed by an individual, the actual receipt of remuneration need not be controlling.

„Work“ could be described as physical or mental effort directed towards doing or making something; paid employment at a job or a trade, occupation, or profession; a duty, task, or undertaking; a result of effort or exertion; materials or tasks on which to expend effort or exertion; the place, office, where a person is employed; decoration or ornamentation.

Work as an activity could be explained by definitions of the *work values*, as helping others, creativity, recognition, high income, independence, aesthetics, self-development, skills and further training, management, life style, prestige, security, achievement.

HISTORY OF WORK

Human history marks enormous development from emergence of the man as a natural and societal being till nowadays. In the pre-historical period, the man was on its lowest level of intellectual development, but the work was the thing that has brought today's development. The hand is a synonym for work and the same makes the man a man. In the beginning, the man made primitive tools (out of wood, bones, stone) and handle them and thus specialized the function of the hand. In that direction, the old saying „the hand is the organ of labor, but its product as well” is widely accepted. By means of working tools, man has irreversibly changed its power. Thus, gradually, he started living in organized communities and started to work in order to meet his own needs which grow bigger and thus condition the emergence of new professions, crafts, etc. In such conditions of development, when human mind has reached a relatively higher level, money as payment means have emerged.

Division of work emerged as well and thus part of people by becoming economically independent were able to dedicate themselves to intellectual work contributing with new knowledge about the man and the world, whereas the other part dedicated themselves to physical work. Such division of labor has resulted in greater interconnection and interdependence of people involved in the process, but it also meant mutual supplementation.

The first social division of work appeared in the middle level of barbarism, whereas the natural division of work common for the previous ways of societal organization (horde, clan and tribe) was the gender division (masculine and feminine division depending on the age); man went hunting and were in charge of protecting the tribe, whereas women were bringing up the children and cooking food.

Further development resulted in more defined division of work, i.e., distinction between agricultural and cattle breeding, then the emergence of craftsmanship, then the emergence of trading. This happened after the first industrial revolution, in the times of new scientific knowledge and their application. This has conditioned the further specialization of work. Nowadays, with constantly developing automatization, a number of professions and crafts have disappeared, and new contemporary ones have emerged.

The valuation of work that has had several historical development stages and has acquired several forms is a very interesting consideration and analysis. Long time ago work was not valued as people were not aware of its price (value). Simple exchange of good emerged first, while the further human

evaluation has led to the emergence of money, which initially was used as means of payment and later as means of valuating work (labor).

In today's contemporary living conditions and depending on the economic developing, different countries develop different criteria for work valuation.

Nevertheless, work has its own price, and has never ceased being „kingdom of necessity” by means of which man conquers his own freedom.

CONCEPT OF THE CULTURE

The culture of the country can be discussed in a wider and a narrower sense. It would embrace the way of life and everyday esthetics issues. What the culture is? Why we are interested in that? There are a lot of definitions and explanations of the culture.

Culture – it is material, intellectual, artistic formation which exists as reality of values (Leskauskaitė B., 1998). Value could be understood as an entity with an expression of content and form or as spiritual formation with a meaning of truth, beauty, and well.

Definitions of the culture, as used in modern parlance, generally include components given in the following explication. Culture is a learned worldview or paradigm shared by a population or group and transmitted socially that influences values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors, and is reflected in the language, dress, food, materials, and social institutions of a group (Burchum J., 2002). Cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding and sensitivity are attributes of the cultural competence. Burchum J. (2002) gives such definitions of the cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding and sensitivity:

Cultural awareness refers to the developing consciousness of culture and the ways in which culture shapes values and beliefs and encompasses an understanding of the influences of one's own culture.

Cultural knowledge refers to the continued acquisition of information about different cultures and incorporates learning related to conceptual and theoretical frameworks that can assist in the processing of facts and data. Cultural knowledge is an essential underpinning for cultural understanding.

Cultural understanding refers to the ongoing development of insights related to the influence of culture on the beliefs, values, and behavior of diverse groups of people. Through cultural

understanding, one comes to recognize that with multiple perspectives come multiple truths, solutions, and ways of knowing.

Cultural sensitivity develops as one comes to appreciate, respect, and value cultural diversity. In so doing, one also comes to realize how one's own personal and professional cultural identity influences practice. This stage is essential if one is to experience effective cultural interaction.

Cultural interaction refers to the personal contact, communication, and exchanges that occur between individuals of different cultures. Cultural skill begins with the ability to communicate effectively with those of other cultures.

For the health care professionals, cultural skill additionally includes the ability to incorporate the client's beliefs, values, and practices into the provision and planning of care. Culture is inseparable from the person; thus, consideration of culture is an essential component of health care.

Issues of the culture and values are in the field of interests of the specialists of various domains. Every activity of human being is based on creativity – the scientist or philosopher is seeking objectivity of the truth, the artist is seeking the ideal of beauty, esthetic perfection (Leskauskaitė B., 1998). The question which is rising often: what are demands which stimulate creation of the personal and/or social values? There is no single answer to this question. The background of culture is associated with nature of human being according to the opinion of some people and the others are following the social concepts and state that the culture is the result of social demands. Nowadays Europe becomes open for the world global values. Some questions are raised again: what are persisting and what are disappearing in the interface of different cultures? Is the dialog among different cultures is possible? Are the ethnical cultures persisting to industrial and information impact? This will lie with many factors: unique of the ethnic culture, vitality of traditions.

WORK AS DETERMINANT OF HEALTH

It is now traditional to review a long list of determinants of health, such as genetic and individual factors, lifestyles, environment, and the availability and effectiveness of health services (Figure 1). The great differences in health status observed across countries and among groups within countries have highlighted the fact that all these determinants are linked to social and economic factors that are at the core of political and societal development (The European Health Report, 2002).

In holistic terms, *health* is a result of the action of various factors of social, economic, general and working environment, and the principal precondition for contented life of humans. All diseases are associated with a number of the risk factors whose presence and/or absence will decide whether or not

a disease develops. Risk factors are specific for every disease, but on the other hand, there may be the same risk factors underlying several diseases. In some cases, a factor may be a risk factor with respect to one disease while being protective with respect to another disease. Common to all the risk factors is that they occur within a defined environment that either supports their presence, thus enabling them to act, or tends to abolish them. The environment becomes one of the major determinants of health. Naturally, environment in this respect is understood broadly, as not only including natural/ecological environment. Thus, determinants of health are characteristics and parameters that affect the presence and development of risk factors for diseases. The best-known groups of health determinants include demographic and biological determinants (age, sex, nationality, etc.), socio-economic determinants (lifestyles, education, social contacts), environment (both general and working), and health care.

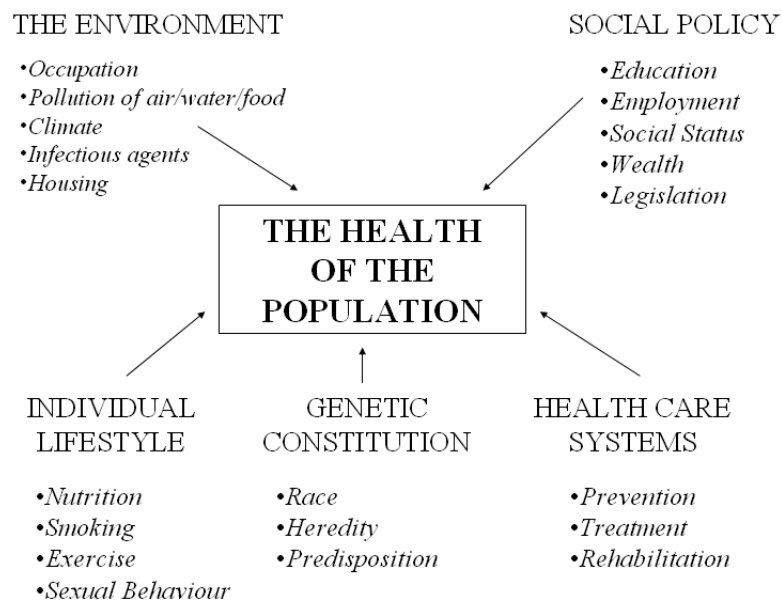


Figure 1. Determinants of health.

The most important determinant of health is *employment*, which is a source of financial and social capital (Human Development Report 2002-2003, 2003). Since becoming unemployed means losing both of these elements at once, it is very stressful and damaging to one's health. To some extent this is also true of retirement as it brings about changes in income, status and social ties. The specific status of a housewife is also relevant, as many studies have defined this economic activity category as being "hazardous" to health. An increased rate of depression, anxiety and mental disturbance can generally

be found among housewives, possibly because their work has a very low status, does not provide economic independence, is socially isolated, monotonous and generates a negative self-image. It can be concluded that a lack of social ties is risky for one's health: the employed generally have the lowest load of psychosomatic symptoms. Those with jobs are also more satisfied with their lives and assess their health more positively.

Among employed people, there is a clear association between *the grade of employment* on the one hand and mortality and morbidity (including rates of absence due to sickness) on the other (The European Health Report, 2002). This relationship remains when adjustment is made for factors such as level of education and tenure of housing. It seems to be explained by the higher levels of control, challenge and support enjoyed in higher grades of work. Both *unemployment* and *work insecurity* have detrimental effects on health, increasing the risk of psychological and physical disorders and suicide. In the younger age groups, work insecurity is associated with poor health, irrespective of any relationship between social class and unemployment.

The impact of work on health is difficult to assess. Member States operate different occupational health systems and maintain different lists of occupational diseases. The reported incidence of occupational diseases varies considerably (for example, from 0.02 to 1.7 cases per 1000 employees per year in EU countries). These rates reflect more the legislative requirements and enforcement, and the efficiency of detection, registration and compensation systems, than the true incidence of occupational diseases. The severe under-registration of occupational diseases and accidents leads to underestimation of their real impact on health and socioeconomic development.

Diseases related to work and the workplace that do not fall into the category of occupational diseases are increasingly recognized as major public health problems in many Member States. The work-related diseases also comprise all non-occupational diseases to whose etiology work contributes, such as musculoskeletal and mental disorders, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and cancer. A significant proportion of cardiovascular diseases is related to working conditions.

There has been a very strong trend since 1997 in Europe to expand the concept of occupational health from "prevention of occupational diseases and accidents" to "overall protection and promotion of health at work". Comprehensive workplace health impact assessment is expected to include the influence of occupational, environmental, lifestyle and social determinants of health. All countries have a need to educate and train competent professionals to ensure adequate provision of multidisciplinary occupational health services.

The three aspects of employment are integral constituents of decent work: employment opportunities, remuneration and working conditions (Ghai D., 2002).

A number of indicators have traditionally been used to measure *employment opportunities*. The three most commonly used measures are: labour force participation rates, employment-to-population ratios and unemployment rates.

Stable *employment* provides not only income and a share of material well-being, but also structures one's social life and gives specific meaning to personal existence (European Communities, 2003). Regular and sufficient income from work gives people a perspective for the future, shaping the households' long-term plans. On the other hand, the costs of work-related illnesses are high.

Employment may be connected with poor *working conditions*. There is a direct relationship between health status and number of hours worked. About one third of the EU workforce is exposed to intensive noise or is required to handle heavy loads, 40% work in painful or tiring positions and more than half have no personal control over comfort factors at their workplace, such as lighting, ventilation and temperature. The most commonly reported health problems related to their work include back pain (30%), stress (28%) and muscular pains in the arms or legs (17%). Because men are more likely than women to work in high-risk sectors, such as construction, they suffer 10 times more fatal and three times more non-fatal accidents than women do. Working conditions of precarious workers are worse than those of permanent workers. Workers in precarious conditions report more physical health problems, namely fatigue and musculo-skeletal disorders. Precarious work is most commonly associated with construction, manufacturing and agriculture, but also with some service sectors, namely transport and in hotels and catering, where skilled and unskilled manual workers are most represented.

The definitions of the work, profession and occupation are in close relation with the *social values of the society* (Ghai D., 2002). Favorite job is a health promoting factor. The results of the researches performed in different countries defines that the health status of unemployed is much worse than those who are employed. However conditions of the work could be harmful to the health of employees, so the approach that employees should be protected from the factors destructive to health is relevant nowadays. The risk to the health is related to many professions. There are some groups of the professional risk factors: physical – noise, temperature, vibration, radiation; chemical – organic and no organic dusts, gas, metals, chemicals; biological – microorganism, toxins; physical overload; psychological factors, i.e. mental, psychological tension at work. Professional load and requirements

was changing during the last decades. The actual problem remains the hard physical work despite of the fast improvement of the technologies. Mental workload and psychological tension in the workplace are concurrent with various nowadays professions and jobs as well. The environment of the work is changing continuously and together with these changes the new harmful to health factors appear. The growing attention is devoted to the phenomenon of psychological isolation, misfit to the work collective, harassment at work, which has a negative influence to the health.

According to the Third European Survey on Working Conditions (2000) almost one in ten workers (9%) reported being subjected to intimidation in the workplace. *Psychological harassment (mobbing)* is an old phenomenon present in many workplaces, caused by deterioration of interpersonal relations as well as organizational dysfunctions (WHO, 2003). This behaviour is related to a variety of factors including discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, age, nationality, disability, background, sexual orientation, and other diversities as well as to socio-economic reasons.

Mobbing occurs in every workplace throughout the world, but is a culture-related phenomenon: therefore the way it is performed and sensitivity to it may vary in different countries. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work there is no single definition of this phenomenon which has been upon internationally. One definition is: "*Workplace bullying* is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards and employee, or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety". Another definition is that of the French Law (2002-73) that reads as follows: "repeated actions of psychological harassment having as object or effect a degradation of working conditions, able to cause damage to the rights and dignity, to affect physical or mental health of harm an individual's professional future" (European Agency for Safety and Health at work, 2002). Mobbing has the potential to cause or contribute to many psychopathologic, psychosomatic and behavioural disorders. However, it is unknown how many victims of a mobbing situation actually develop health effects. This probably depends on the duration and intensity of the stress stimuli, but the personality traits of the victim may play either a protective or an enhancing role. Mobbing affects the victim's self-confidence and self-efficacy in all domains and displays its effects in all areas of life, such as family, friends, social relations, and work environment. The victim becomes confused, less efficient and has high levels of fear, shame and embarrassment, thus affecting not only work but also interpersonal relations. The probability of being harassed may increase due to a bad management style, inadequate organization of work and an unfavourable work environment. Prevention of mobbing is based on the possibility of achieving a great cultural change of individual values, attitudes, verbal expressions and ways of interacting.

The opportunity to apply the own capabilities and knowledge, to make a decision or to participate in a decision making has an impact to the health of employees. This also contributes to strengthening of the self-esteem of employees and helps to develop the system of social support (Kalėdienė R., Petrauskienė J., Rimpela A., 1999).

The relationship between *unemployment* and health is a complex one (European Communities, 2003). The detrimental effects on health can be attributed to economic, social and psychological consequences. Unemployment results in a loss or reduction of income that may or may not hasten the unemployed under the poverty line. Sudden redundancy and long-term unemployment and the associated loss of social status and social contacts and increasing hopelessness of the situation may lead to stress with consequent psychological problems. Unemployment may also be associated with a loss of occupational health services and reduced access to other sources of healthcare. On the other hand, the health of unemployed young people is not much different from health of young people with a job or undergoing education and training. Although nervous and depressive symptoms occur more frequently, compared with elderly unemployed these problems are less severe.

The inter-sector understanding of health is important in the context of new forms of organising work (more home-based and more precarious), which have implications for the development of occupational health standards and services and, the transformation of the social support systems, namely the family, that has implications for the development of healthcare services, namely of community and home-based care.

METHODOLOGY

Prior to Lodz, we were given the background for thoughts and the topic for investigation to be started in our own languages. Available published materials and local Internet sites were used in Macedonian, Romanian (in Moldova) and Lithuanian languages for information required searching. Some of us conducted a small scale study, random sampling, to obtain the information on attitude and values of work in our own languages. Information was translated into English by our own. Based on that, each of us created the picture of “work” in the content of our own languages.

In Lodz, having received further requirements for the collective work and criteria for the evaluation, we created the objectives of the study in order to meet the goal. The works done prior to Lodz were rearranged in a way for further comparability and possibility to draw the conclusion. We did later look for the additional information available on Internet, on our local sites as well as from scientific publications.

WORK IN MOLDOVA

RUSSIAN OR ROMANIAN LANGUAGE?

Historically many populations’ movements went through land of Moldova and dependency to different empires took place. In 1991, the country got independency, being a small by size but with many nationalities. Presently Romanian is a national language, but Russian language is widely used as well. I am a representative of Russian speaking population, so my writing will aspects, related to “work” in general in Moldova, with a particular stress on Russian speaking population. What does word “*работа*”, later “work” in English mean in Russian language? It means....

- labour; working, functioning, (I am at work all day long... his work is blind-alley employment, etc)
- profession, job, type of work performed (lawyer, managerteam work, examination paper...)
- activities, operations, assignment, tasks, proceed towards a goal or along a path or through an activity (digging, heavy earthwork, excavation ,”work your way through every problem or task”; "She was working on her second martini when the guests arrived"; "Start from the bottom and work towards the top, etc.

- as a result of activities, accomplishments through the effort or activity of a persons or things; "the symphony was hailed as an ingenious work"; "the work of an active imagination"; "erosion is the work of wind or water over time" (World Bank, 2002).

MOTIVATION, LEADERSHIP, DETERMINANTS

What determines motivates the leadership and what are the pitfalls in work, performance and organization of work? Transitional period is a painful time for majority, but a good opportunity for many. Corruption is intruded all governmental level, which diminishing efficiency of work at all level and puts a great pressure for the society. Leadership to a great extent motivated by power, recognition and access to bribes. Governmental institution does not perform efficiently and many who reached that level can use this opportunity for the personal benefits. Family ties and personal contacts do matter in Moldova in carrier building, which again diminish the competition and competency. From such bases in organizational and governmental structure there is little motivation for persons who posses a high level of professional ethics. From one of the surveys, 42% of the interviewered social servants felt that they were not given adequate instruction for the current administrative work, they were doing.

The administrative corruption index or the proportion of bribes in the total income in the Republic of Moldova is high primarily due to low income in the country, although one could surely point out an inverse process: due to relatively high bribes, income is, relatively, low. Observation that is in countries with a higher proportion of women in top levels of state structures and in parliament, typically have less corruption, showing that the ethical standards of women are higher than those of men. Only one woman in Moldova takes Ministry position.

If, for example, in France and Portugal this indicator is slightly higher that 1 per cent, then in eastern European countries this indicator varies up to 22 per cent. Corruption in Moldova means: over-regulation of private sector, extremely high burden on tax collection and looses for the budget, massive shadow economy, low level of quality and consumer goods, high risk for the financial markets, low level of foreign investment, enormous foreign debts (117% of GDP), economic stagnation, increased level of criminality, etc. (World Bank, 2002).

ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF WORK

Expressions on work came from the past times. It was formed by the value of society, over the person, positive attitude and value of the manual jobs and manual workers over the intellectual ones. During the most of the time in the last century privacy did not exist, it was social

unacceptable. People were treated “equally”, if not taking into consideration leaders of communist party; they were special ones and “deserve” superiority, higher quality of life, behind the closed door of the society. People were guaranteed with life time jobs by the system, and goods like an apartment, were distributed for free. The only thing has to be mentioned that the queue for the apartment from the organization where one worked could be for the period of 20 years. From that population was little motivated to perform well, as salary based remuneration was not encouraging. Based on that negative attitude was formed. Here there are some negative sayings about work.

- *“работа не волк, в лес не убежит”* — the work will still be there, tomorrow, ... in the future, etc., (author’s translation), meaning one should not be in a hurry to perform the work, it can wait to be performed;
- *“ты работа нас не бойся мы тебя не тронем”* – work, do not be afraid of us, we will not touch you (author’s translation), meaning, one is not going to be involved in work, he/she we will escape from it.

At the same time, those who were clearly outliers in the society were supervised in order to be a part of the team, as a group was the smallest entity of the society. Below there are a few expressions on encouraging the performance during the work:

- *“взять кого-л. в работу”* — to take somebody into work, to take somebody in hand (author’s translation), meaning, to support, supervise someone in his work;
- *“гореть на работе”* —to burn at work (author’s translation); to live for one's work, to be married to one's job, meaning to be fully devoted to the work;
- *“кто рано встает тому бог дает”* – who wakes up early in the morning, will be blessed by God (author’s translation), success will come to ones who work hard;
- *“работать как лошадь”* – work like a horse (author’s translation), meaning work hard

During the last decades many changes occurred due to the transition period of the country and definitely attitudes and value of “work” changed a lot. Work, got a greater value in the society. Work became the most important aspect of people’s life, and for that they became ready to struggle and stay in a queue for additional diplomas for many years.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND HOW SOCIETY DEALS WITH IT

During Soviet time we had no “unemployment” and no sex; we were proud of the best country in the world, and felt pity for “poor” Americans, who had no security with job for lifetime. After collapse of

Soviet Union, millions of qualified workers found themselves unemployed with almost no social security and here was the difference between Eastern part of Europe and developed world, as people were left for themselves. Many still are ready to accept any type of jobs in any possible part of the world, regardless of possessing high education.

The existing data on labour force and Labour market is almost imperfect. According to the official data in 1999, the share of economically active population in total population was around 50%, employment represent of 44% from total population, or 88.5 from the labour force. Other reliable sources prove that the above data is highly underestimated and unemployment rate is much higher. In most sectors were declines in labour force, still agriculture represented the most employed one and took over 27% of employment in 2000; health and social sectors over 9%, contraction 3%, manufacturing 12%, education 15%. Although in educational, state administration, transport labour force is increased for last decade (Tasis, 2000).

According to the government policy, unemployment benefit allowed to the registered at an employment office and willing and able to work (Social Security Online Report, 2002). *“Claimants must have no income and have been salaried for at least 6 months in the last 12 months preceding unemployment. Waiting periods apply for some categories of worker: 2 months for the non-voluntarily unemployed, 60 days for recently graduated students, and 30 days for ex-servicemen on the completion of military service benefits may be reduced, postponed, suspended, or terminated if the worker is discharged for violating work discipline, leaving employment without good cause, violating conditions for a job placement or vocational training, or for filing fraudulent claims”.*

Social security systems in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union devote most of their resources to earnings-related pensions and neglect "targeted" interventions to aid losers from the transition to a market economy. As social insurance systems, they have the characteristic weaknesses of the insurance model, paying benefits on the basis of past contributions or work history rather than need. Yet contributions and benefits are not closely enough related to enable the system to operate as social insurance in a market economy (Mabbett D., 1996).

According to international labour organization, in Moldova social protection benefits is 9.32 % of GDP. From that, unemployment benefits consist of 0.04%. (GDP in 2000 353.5\$ according to European observatory on health care systems, 2002) (Social security: issues, challenges and prospects, 2001).

It was examined that labour market performance in Moldova by focusing on firm dynamics and stated on low rate of firm entry and the low rate of job creation in existing firms. Firm exit is limited and thus is not an important factor behind job losses. The only sector of the economy that creates jobs on a net basis is that consisting of de novo private and small firms. However, in Moldova this sector is significantly smaller than in the most successful transition economies. The important argument on the

primary factor behind the small size of the employment generating sector could be the high cost of doing business in Moldova. These include numerous administrative barriers, intrusive and costly inspections, and associated corruption. These costs—extremely high even by regional standards—lower the expected returns to business activity and thus discourage firm formation and growth (Rytkowski J., 2004).

In the local market some vacancies do exist, mostly unqualified ones with a very low rewarding, and a few, demanding high qualification and training abroad to which limited population layer has access. Even equal opportunity to access jobs add is questionable, as better jobs are placed in internet or require fax machine, leaving most of the population being accessibility.

Severe financial problems, high unemployment, poor social and legal protection drive Moldovans outside to their homeland. According to last year CIVIS centre for analyses and investigations (Poverty, Unemployment Drive Moldovans Outside Their Homeland, 2003), around 60% of the interviewed reported that they had to leave the country as they were unable to find a proper paid job in Moldova. Most of them left for Russia or Western European countries and were performing according to the reports manual labour job mostly. Official County statistical data is quite controversial, but many sources prove that above one million of the population left the country, meaning a quarter from the all. Due to the lack of labour agreements between Moldova and Western countries, except Italy to my knowledge, 80% of the labour force is trafficked illegally. The same study shows that above 70% of youth considers poverty and unemployment to be the worth today's problem.

Looking closer to gender issue and transition period, female became even more vulnerable. Especially in the first phrase of the transitional period women according to UNICEF report (Labour market in transition countries, 2002) were almost twice more affected to the employment cuts, compared to men; besides they were 2 times fewer opening their private enterprises compared to men. For most of the women it has caused a very stress full situation due to high unemployment, unequal access to the formal labour market, low wages if any at all, lack of childcare and high frequency of sexual harassment in the workplace as well as gender violence. The number of single headed households has increased and for most of these women the burden to feed the family. The gap between what the women want to do and what they can do makes the women to look at alternative opportunities to earn their living. Some of these women enter prostitution in order to feed the family, sometimes encouraged by their husbands. Other women seek the trafficking mechanisms believing they will get work as domestic workers, in restaurants or other but end up in prostitution against their will. Social constructions of gender relations and sexuality also lay the ground for trafficking for sexual exploitation. As many as 50-60 of the women and girls are leaving Moldova daily, being trafficked for sex business.

The adds of such “*high paid jobs*” are regularly published in the media (A Resource Book for working against Trafficking in Women and Girls Baltic Sea Region, 2002).

In the light of this, the Ministry of Education of Moldova is currently reviewing the national vocational educational training (VET) system, with a view to increasing the quality of training delivery and making it more flexible and responsive to labour market needs in a transition economy. A New Concept on Vocational Guidance Training and Upgrading of Human Resources has been developed by a Parliamentary Commission, involving experts from Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour, and approved in July 2003 (<http://www.etf.eu.int>).

WORK AND HEALTH OF POPULATION

It is well proved that work, or its absence, depending on the environment, is one of the determinants of population health. Unfortunately, I could not find any epidemiological study recently done in Moldova on work, health and their association. Country is not occupied with heavy industry, which could influence health. Still in a position of extreme difficulty running the business from one side, and high unemployment rate from another, many small or middle sized profit oriented enterprises put little attention to the employee’s needs and health. National Centre of Preventive Medicine is entitled to protect the health of employees against occupational hazards, at least in the paper. From my own observation, most of headdresses do not have air conditioning and professionals are highly exposed to chemical substances; in the construction industry, many work without any or not enough protection, being at high levels from the ground.

There is no published study on working hazards related absenteeism. At private sector the issue of long term absenteeism most probably will not be tolerated by the employers. Workers can be easily dismissed due to poor social protection system and presently weak position of Trade Union.

As culturally, traditionally and historically Moldova’s population has similarities with Russian and we all were living under the same system, I tried to find scientific works in this field from Russia. Regrettably enough, Moldova is considered to be the poorest country in the European region with contribution as much as 13\$ per capita within health care system in 2003, this is one of the differences with other countries (Moldova Health policy note: The health sector in transition, 2003).

The changing life expectancy in Russia is a consequence of a complex pattern of trends in different causes of death, some of which have their origins long in the past and others that result from contemporary circumstances. The fall in life expectancy at birth varied widely between regions, with declines for men and women highly correlated. The regions with the largest falls were predominantly

urban, with high rates of labour turnover, and a higher average but unequal distribution of household income (Walberg P., McKee M., Shkolnikov V. et al., 1998).

Many investigation included assessment of classic cardiovascular risk factors (family history, smoking, blood pressure, and blood lipids) along with general health variables. The paper presents sex specific data on risk factors for coronary heart diseases; men in the lower socioeconomic groups were most affected by the sharp increases in mortality in the 1990s. Data suggest that high cardiovascular mortality in Russia *may be driven not only by the classic risk factors* for coronary heart disease (Averina M. et al., 2003). The same statement can be applied to Moldova women. Life expectancy at birth remains very low compared to Western European countries, and the male-female difference is small, due to lower life expectancy in females of Moldova (Moldova Health policy note: The health sector in transition, 2003).

Soviet-style health policy was ineffective in dealing with the crisis, and stress per se which seem to be one of the primary cause of the rise in mortality (Cockerham W.C., 1997).

In Moldova psychological help within health care system is not widely practiced yet, although there are some NGO's are dealing with the issues. No baseline study done in this field, and stress management till now is not the priority within health care system agenda. Due to scarcity of financial resources health Policy still more care oriented, over the preventive.

As long as investment conditions are not attractive, and new working places are not opened, population will be neglected in its own country. Till now it is not protected by legal agreement neither with hosting Moldova workforce countries, nor by domestic legacy and social benefits. In spite of raising many related issues, mostly by international organizations, working in this field, little cooperation with the local government is seen.

Priority should be given to fostering job creation through facilitating the formation of new firms and to reducing the constraints on the expansion of existing firms. The government should avoid measures aimed at forestalling the destruction of unviable jobs and firm exit as these are not conducive to long-run productivity and employment growth. Enhancing labour market flexibility is a further priority, as currently the apparently stringent provisions of the Labour Code are not complied with and enforced. Given the unsatisfactory business environment, active labour market programmes are unlikely to be effective unless carefully targeted at the most disadvantaged worker groups (Rytkowski J., 2004).

WORK IN LITHUANIA

WORK MEANING IN LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE

The "Work" in Lithuanian language is described as: *Darbas - tai: 1) fizinė ir protinė veikla; dirbimas: fizinis, protinis, visuomeninis, pedagoginis; 2) užsiėmimas, tarnyba, verslas: siuvėjo (vairuotojo, mokytojo ir kt.); 3) veiklos vaisius: mokslo, meno; 4) gamybos atlikimo būdas, kokybė; 5) poelgis, elgesys.*

The "Work" is: *1) physical and mental activity; working: physical, mental, public, pedagogical; 2) trade, occupation, business: driver, teacher, tailor, etc.; 3) result of the action: scientific, art; 4) the way of production, quality; 5) behavior, action (author's translation).*

Perhaps everyone can agree that our life could be better if we work better. This illustrates the relationships between work and well-being. The work - it is the human activity seeking to create the goodies. The work always is performed by human, and people are able to perform different works in different ways, however some works can be done only by the efforts of many people working together. That is the reason for interchange of the results of the work and/or interchange of the work as the source of goodies. The regulation of the work differs in different countries and is based on specific principles which are hardly conformed.

The work is changing all the time as the standards of work are getting higher. The expectations and requirements of the people as customers of products and services are growing continuously in concurrent with the human development process, spreading of information technologies, etc.

There are several synonymous of "work" defined as labour, employment, job, vocation, occupation, effort, exertion, toil and some descriptive terms or keywords of "work" - work relations, work conditions, work experience, work law, work contract, remuneration.

There are some folk sayings about work in Lithuania, i.e. "*even the stone during the harvest time is moving*"; "*who don't work, that don't eat*" or "*the bread is crying when the sluggard eats it*", "*a stitch in time saves nine*" (author's translation).

ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF THE WORK

What the work means for the people? What are the values of the work? Work is not merely earning one's living but an inherent aspect of our personality to test, express and extend our skills through work (Metelmann H., 2003). Education is to provide opportunities for the learners to gain an awareness of

the variety and scope of the work and acquire the requisite knowledge and skills. It has already been well-documented that the degree of success achieved by learners is influenced by working habits which are picked up during the early stages of schooling and by appropriate working strategies. School is a bearer of a culture of knowledge and a culture of co-operation which has to be open to the surrounding world. In order to provide students with education, which meets the demands of modern working life, i.e. transferable skills, mobility, continuing education, Lithuanian higher education has to relevantly consider the development of students' communication competence both in the mother tongue and foreign languages (Cesevičiūtė I., Minkutė-Henrickson R., 2002).

Everything that people do is influenced by their values – how they run their lives, their ambitions, how they relate to others. A *value* may be defined as an enduring belief, a specific way of behaving or 'of being', which is preferable to any other (Cox Ch., Cooper C., 1988). People usually have a complex set of interrelated values in each aspect of their life, and this is known as a value system. In relation to managers, England G. and Lee R. (1974) make the following assertions: "Personal value systems influence the perception of individual and organizational success as well as their achievement". The areas in which chief executive's values are particularly significant are those of decision making, including the definition of objectives, and the influence he has on the culture of the organization. This, in turn, will influence the way in which people are treated in the organization and how they relate to each other. The manager and his team are one of the most important influences on the culture of an organization, and thus on both its ultimate success and the wellbeing of its members, and yet little is known of the characteristics of successful people at this level.

There is considerable variation in *work pattern* from individual to individual. In addition to the long day in the office, some of people take work home. Some people are trying to keep weekends free to spend unencumbered time with their families. Some people are very active, enjoy what they are doing and are very involved in their work, in a positive and health way.

The person *attitude to the work* is reflected by the emotions which are motives for the behaviour of the person and by the level of the job satisfaction (Tietjen M., Myers R., 1998). The high quality manufacturing or services could be provided only when person who produces or provides them are satisfied with the work. The employees who are motivated and satisfied with the job are not only creative and productive, but they are successful as well (Tschohl J., 1999).

Work values such as content and variety of the work, possibility to communicate at work, respect to the employees and emotional status have a high impact on the work motivation of the employees (Appleyby

A., 2000, Romero J., 2000). The *work motivation* of employees is related not only to the cultural and social values, but to the hierarchy of the needs of employees as well (Herbig P., Genestre A., 1997). Among the needs of employees the needs of improvement, interesting work, achievement, promotion, recognition, and responsibility are emphasized. The needs of improvement are reflected by the self-actualization, i.e. intentions to adjust the abilities and creativity in the work.

Attitudes and values of the work for health professionals in Lithuania

According to the results of the survey which was conducted among Lithuanian physicians, the improvement at work was rated as very important or important by the 97% of respondents, the adjustment of the abilities and creativity at the work were rated as very important or important by the 85% and 75% of respondents respectively (Vladičkienė J, Petrauskienė J., 2001). The study concludes that the respondents prefer to moral work values rather than material ones, but they are dissatisfied with their material status, low salary, working conditions and insufficient sharing of information between doctors and managers. The attitudes to the work of Lithuanian physicians are similar to the attitudes of that in the other countries. According to the results of the study conducted by Romero J. and Kleiner B. (2000) the solicitude of the employees for the workplace are increasing and the employees are more interested in saving their workplaces than in awards and this have a great impact on the quality level of the work at the transition period to the market economy. The work stability, the work guarantees and recognition are very important factors in seeking higher standards of job performance.

The challenge of culture to management is the ability to understand, cooperate with, manage and do business with other cultures from the standpoint of operations (Oh A., 2004). Success or failure depends upon the degree to which people that has different ways of doing things and different priorities can work together. Intercultural relationships are fragile. Countless hazards within an organization's work flow are created by communication problems, cultural differences in motivational and value systems, diverse codes of conduct, even differences in orientation to fundamentals such as interpretations and practices of core values.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKET

The creation or failure to create favorable conditions for employment has a major influence on the social climate. Unemployment, low wages and meager pensions are widely regarded as grave social problems in Lithuania (Šimašius R., 1999). Social policy and employment regulation should thus be contemplated together. Social "policy", or activities intended to help people in poverty, has existed from

time immemorial, but in an altogether different form. It referred to activities carried out by churches, philanthropic organizations and individuals. Meanwhile, employment policy, just like labour law, sprang up as late as in the times of the industrial revolution. Until then, labour relationships, which are now regulated by labour law, had been left to self-regulation or private law. Employment was subject to the general principles of private law: equality of the parties, inviolability of property, freedom of contract, and binding agreements. As opinion polls show, those who believe that labour safety requirements do secure safe jobs are not so many in number as those who argue that the state should control working conditions and labour safety. So people think that things are bad but they may be improved. Specialists appear to hold the same views. The goals assigned to employment regulations seem to be acceptable. No doubt, it's good when people have safe jobs, are not ill-treated and earn well. But good intentions are not sufficient to achieve these results.

Unemployment and labour market in Lithuania

Unemployment. In Lithuania for every 100 people of working age 89 were employed in 1991 (Lithuanian Human Development Report, 2003). Ten years later, in 2000, the number of people employed had fallen to 74. Of those who became unemployed, women constituted two thirds (68%). According to the Department of Statistics of Lithuania data, unemployment in Lithuania at 2003 stood at 11.6%. At the beginning of 2003, youth unemployment stood at 13.4%. Every second young person registered with the Labour Exchange has no qualifications and only one in 10 has completed specialized secondary or tertiary education. With an increasing number of unqualified people among the registered unemployed, the number of long-term unemployed was growing and in 2002 the long-term unemployed accounted for 27.4% of the total unemployed (The Report on the Lithuanian Social Security System, 2003).

Table 1. Rates of unemployment in Lithuania (Department of Statistics of Lithuania, 2004)

Unemployment level (2003 IV quarter)	11.6 %
Number of unemployed (2003 IV quarter)	187.6 thousand pop.
Minimal unemployed allowance	135 Lt
Maximal unemployed allowance	250 Lt

Unemployment risk factors. Unemployment according to labour force surveys in Lithuania most likely to be unemployed include: 1) new entrants to the labour market, 2) persons with little education; 3) non-married men, 4) ethnic minorities (Unemployment risk factors in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 2003).

Unskilled manual workers face higher unemployment risk than those who are semiskilled or skilled, and also higher than average for white-collar workers. In Lithuania unemployment tends to be higher for men than for women. The country-specific industrial developments appear to play a role in the structure of unemployment. In 1999, unemployment was influenced by the Russian economic crisis, and Lithuania suffered job cuts in wood, machinery and electrical equipment industry.

Belonging to an ethnic minority tends to increase the unemployment risk, but this effect weakened between 1999 and 2000. The relatively low unemployment rates recorded in the capital and some other cities are often a result of special factors, e.g. higher education attainment and different types of work.

Labour market in Lithuania. The economic literature affirms the importance for economic growth of investment in human capital. Growth or decline in specific sectors directly affects labor demand as well as demand for specific knowledge. As a knowledge economy develops, shifts in employment occur, including increased employment in knowledge-intensive sectors and increased use of information and communications technology (OECD, 2003). These shifts are apparent in Lithuania, causing structural changes in labor demand with ramifications for education and training systems. As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, Lithuania's transition years have seen a sharp shift in employment from the public to the private sector. Since 1994 employment has continued to shift from industry to services, but agricultural employment has fallen as well. In sum, there has been substantial movement over the past decade. Employment declines in agriculture and industry have given rise to much unemployment, as job losers frequently found it difficult to compete for jobs with young labour market entrants (OECD, 2003). Employers tend to invest in younger but experienced workers, and more training occurs in growing sectors. As entering EU the Lithuanian business community faces major challenges in adapting to EU regulations and standards and this adaptation will require significant investments in retooling and process and management change to meet health, safety, environmental, and other standards. But it also provides an opportunity to introduce innovative and more competitive technologies, processes, and management practices. Government policies and programs need to support this retooling as well as knowledge transfer and networking among firms and the research and education communities.

What Government is doing

The principal rights to social security, including social insurance, are defined under the *Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania*. The Constitution promulgates that “*the State shall guarantee the right of citizens to old age and disability pension, as well as to social assistance in the event of unemployment,*

sickness, widowhood, loss of breadwinner, and other cases provided by law” (article 52), “*every person shall have the right to social security in the event of unemployment*” (article 48), “*the law shall provide for paid maternity leave before and after childbirth, as well as for favourable working conditions and other privileges*” (article 39).

During 12 years of independence Lithuania has developed the legal framework regulating labour market relations and has drafted the secondary legislation (The Report on the Lithuanian Social Security System, 2003). Republic of Lithuania *Law on Support of the Unemployed*, together with other laws regulating labour relations, establishes state guarantees of the constitutional right of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania to work and choice of occupation.

In cases provided for by the Law on Support of the Unemployed the State shall guarantee the citizens: free vocational counseling and consultation services, as well as information concerning available jobs; free labour exchange services in looking for work and going into job; free vocational training facilities in the event of unemployment; the possibility, in the event of unemployment, to perform public works and works financed from the Employment Fund; and unemployment benefit. The Law provides legal employment guarantees applicable to certain groups of individuals – the disabled, individuals aged between 16 and 25 years who undertake jobs for the first time; graduates who begin working according to their occupation; long-term unemployed whose duration of enrolment with a labour exchange exceeds 2 years; a mother or a father growing a child under 8 years of age, persons who are within 5 years of becoming eligible to receive full old age pension; persons released from places of imprisonment where they stayed for longer than 6 months (Law on Support of the Unemployed, 1998). Services and support for the unemployed and jobseekers, also for the employers looking for workers of respective qualification established by this Law and legal acts implementing it shall be provided by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and its territorial labour exchanges.

Republic of Lithuania *Law on Vocational education and Training* established the structure and administration of the vocational education and training system and regulates the initial vocational training and labour market vocational training. The document specifies that the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for managing the initial vocational training at the state level, whereas the management of continuous vocational training shall be vested in the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and defines the competence of these two authorities in the sphere of vocational training (Law on Vocational education and Training, 1998).

The Programme of Increasing Employment of the Republic of Lithuania for 2001-2004 (Official Magazine, 2001) defines the strategic objectives of the unemployment and labour market policies,

which aim at coping with the negative consequences of structural economic reforms and the external impact on employment and the labour market, increasing employment, reducing unemployment, and restoring balance on the labour market. The Programme establishes five main directions of the implementation of the unemployment reduction policies: development of the system of the creation of jobs; improvement of the promotion of employment; increasing ability to adjust to changes; increasing equal opportunities in the labour market; increasing the integrity of employment policy.

Social insurance in Lithuania represents the largest part of the system of social security. It covers almost all citizens of Lithuania, and more than half of them are beneficiaries of state social insurance benefits (Lithuanian Human Development Report, 2003). The paramount goal of the system of social insurance is to guarantee income for insured individuals who have lost their ability to work as a result of illness, maternity, old age, disability, widow- or widower-hood, unemployment, accidents at work and occupational diseases, in cases established by laws.

Lithuanian *Labour Exchange at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour* and its 46 local labour exchange offices began their activities on 1991. Lithuanian Labour Exchange implements state employment guarantees on labour market, provides assistance for job seekers in finding job, provides employers with necessary skilled labour force, involves registered job seekers into population employment programs (vocational training and retraining, organization of own business, placement into public works and works financed from the Employment Fund, establishment of new jobs, activities of job clubs) and pays unemployment benefits (OECD, 2003).

Tripartite commissions functioning on a voluntary basis are set up at the labour exchanges for the consideration of issues concerning the population employment. The commissions consist of representatives of trade unions, employers and public authorities.

Work for health professionals

The “Health for All for the 21st Century” document (WHO, 1997) declares that a well-trained and motivated workforce is essential for health systems to function well; the health workforce of the 21st century must be capable of providing quality services based on HFA values; a culture of health that respects and supports the right to health, ethics, equity and gender sensitivity is fundamental; educational institutions for health personnel should constantly review their curricula in the light of new knowledge, with a view to meeting the needs of people.

Understanding and respecting the norms, values, and beliefs held by people of diverse cultural backgrounds is an integral part of providing culturally acceptable healthcare programs in different countries (Cholewka P., 2001).

What does the work mean for the health care professionals? The current changes in health care delivery demand accountability from each of the disciplines. However, it is important to recognize that, as any system undergoes change, new opportunities are created for transforming the job descriptions of existing disciplines or for the development of new categories of workers (Jones M., Bond M., Cason C., 1998). Large health care systems require an organizational commitment to culturally competent care to meet the needs of the culturally diverse populations they serve. The quality of the support, specifically in resource allocation, determines hiring patterns and training programs that shape the work force. The philosophy and mission of the organization and its leader's commitment set the tone for how care will be delivered to patients. Without an explicit emphasis on cultural commitment in all areas (structure, process, and outcomes), it is unlikely that the unique culture-driven needs of patients will be successfully met.

The common image of what doctor or a nurse or another professional should be remains under the great influence of the biomedical model of medicine. There is a consensus between the ideal self-images of these professions as cultivated by their representatives and the desired visions of them held by ordinary people who belong to the largest group namely the category of actual or potential patients (Zalewski Z., 2000). A few questions might be posed: what is the expected ideal of a doctor (or a representative of another medical profession) that best fits the realm of health care endeavor in modern societies? Should he/she be nothing but a highly skilled craftsman or serviceman, meeting all individual demands with the skills and services he/she can supply? Or should he/she rather be a person equipped with broad intellectual horizons enabling him/her to undertake and resolve critically all challenges that he/she might face? These questions are open and they inevitably share all benefits as well as the shortcomings and discrepancies of the model by which they are influenced.

During the period of implementation of philosophy of continuous quality improvement in health care, work motivation of health professionals became of particular importance in Lithuania as well. The results of the study representing opinion of Lithuanian primary health care physicians' explored that more than half of the respondents (61%) are highly motivated in their work (Vladičkienė J., Petrauskienė J., 2001). The level of work motivation of physicians is closely associated with age - with an increase of age of respondents, the level of work motivation diminishing. The level of work motivation is associated to some professional and socioeconomic factors. Future guarantees,

interesting work, monetary award have the most important impact on physicians' level of work motivation. Relevant communications among health care managers and physicians and perspectives of the specialty have significant impact on the level of motivation of elder respondents while the perspectives of the specialty, work itself and possibilities of self-expression in the work have impact on level of motivation of younger respondents. More than half of respondents are satisfied with their profession, however many physicians are dissatisfied with the low salary, too much paper work, work conditions and lack of possibilities to improve their qualification. Almost half of respondents are dissatisfied with communication with managers. So the role of health care managers is very important in creating organizational culture which increases level of work satisfaction and motivation among health care professionals and encourage partnership of employees.

WORK AND HEALTH OF POPULATION

A key methodological issue describing health status and responsiveness is how people reply to questions requiring categorical responses such as very poor, poor, satisfactory, good and very good (The European Health Report, 2002). Large numbers of people perceive that work has a strong impact on their health and wellbeing. In the evaluation of the health of population self-assessment of the health could be used. A half of the Lithuanian population assesses their health status as moderate, on third – as good and one sixth – as poor.

Evidence shows that *stress at work* plays an important role in contributing to the large differences in health, sickness absence and premature death that are related to social status (Wilkinson R., Marmot M., 1998). Several workplace studies in Europe show that health suffers when people have little opportunity to use their skills, and low authority over decisions. Having little control over one's work is particularly strongly related to an increased risk of low back pain, sickness absence and cardiovascular disease. These risks have been found to be independent of the psychological characteristics of the people studied. In short, they seem to be related to the work environment.

Study of the self-assessment of health among Lithuanian primary care physicians revealed that 45% of the respondents assessed their health as good, 51% - as moderate and 4% - as poor (Vladičkienė J., Petrauskienė J., 2001). Physicians who are higher motivated in work more often assessed their health as good in comparison to the less motivated. Psychological status of the person is important to their general health status and well-being. Stress level among Lithuanian primary care physicians is very high – more than 90% reported that they feel stressed at the work (10% among them – feel stress at

work almost every day, 21% - a few times per week and 59% - a few times per month and 10% - rarely).

Studies have also examined the role of *demands at work*. Some show an interaction between demands and control. Jobs with both high demand and low control carry special risk. Some evidence indicates that social support in the workplace may reduce this effect. A virtuous circle can be established as well: improved conditions of work will lead to a healthier work force; this will lead to improved productivity, and hence to the opportunity to create a still healthier more productive workplace; redesigning practices in workplaces enables employees to have more control, greater variety and more opportunities for development at work and benefits health. Work that does not provide appropriate rewards – in terms of money, self-esteem and status – damages health.

Job security increases health, wellbeing and job satisfaction. Unemployment puts health at risk, and the risk is higher in regions where unemployment is widespread. Evidence from a number of countries shows that, even after allowing for other factors, unemployed people and their families suffer a substantially increased risk of premature death (WHO, 2002). The health effects of unemployment are linked to both its psychological consequences and financial problems.

The effects start when people first feel their jobs are threatened, even before they actually become unemployed. This shows that anxiety about insecurity is also detrimental to health. Job insecurity has been shown to increase effects on mental health (particularly anxiety and depression), self-reported ill health, heart disease and risk factors for heart disease. Because unsatisfactory or insecure jobs can be as harmful as unemployment, merely having a job cannot protect physical or mental health. As job insecurity continues, it acts as a chronic stressor whose effects increase with the length of exposure; it increases sickness absence and health service use.

Policy should have three goals: preventing unemployment and job insecurity; reducing the hardship suffered by the unemployed; and restoring people to secure jobs (The Report on the Lithuanian Social Security System, 2003). Government management of the economy can make an important contribution to job security and the reduction of unemployment. Limitations on working hours may also be beneficial, if they are pursued alongside job security and satisfaction. To equip people for the work available, high standards of education and good retraining schemes are important.

WORK IN MACEDONIA

CULTURE AND MEANING OF WORK

If the culture is the measurement of the level to which a nation has perfected its creativity, spiritual knowledge, learning about nature, society, science or art and since creativity is expressed by means of work, then it is necessary for *the culture* and *the work* to be presented as terms related one to the other. The creativity in Macedonia has its roots in the cultural and spiritual creations. This, however, does not mean that our culture cannot be found in the work of some persons in other fields (medicine, astrology, genetic engineering etc.). Creativity and we already said it relates to the work, is carried by each individual member of a nation. Therefore, when I'm abroad I actually carry and present the image of Macedonian culture. Often, this image is made by the way the person performs his or hers specialized work. Finally, every country has its own culture. I do believe there are no major and minor cultures, but cultures which due to certain reasons and circumstances existed for longer or shorter period. Hence, they did or did not have time to perfect their culture, creativity and work to a higher level. But, everything is relative. If our work has created higher level of culture compared to other countries, at the same time other countries have created (achieved) higher level of culture (by means of work, of course) compared to us. Nevertheless, there will always be someone better than them. Maybe, in the centuries to come. Nowadays Japanese state is recognized for its high performance level, and this is the situation in a given historical moment. Where have the great Japanese workers been when Hellenic, Pre-Hellenic and the early Byzantine culture were flourishing in Macedonia? That culture was created by working. The work MUST NOT be understood only as manual work or 8 to 15 office work or surgical operation. According to my opinion, the work has to be related primarily to the mental condition of a human mind, in order for the thought (the intangible) to be translated into deed (tangible). If in a certain historical moment the „thought” is obstructed by series of reasons, then it is logical for the „deeds” to stagnate also. Due to a series of reasons such as war, bad economic situation, weak political and religions leaders, poor communist and facts-memorizing education of the population, the mental stagnation period in Macedonia is long, resulting in very few people who manage to translate their ideas into a specific action. Nevertheless, the cultural rise of Macedonia (including other countries) will not stop moving, since for what is needed is only a single person capable of making the idea reality and the process continues!

The work is a feature of every living being. Both ants and humans work for subsistence, yet people also work for other needs beside that one- and ants don't. The work as such should be viewed from many points of view in order to define its meaning. If work is viewed from the evolution point of view,

from the aspect of Darwin's *theory on the origin of species*, we should be focusing on the postulate that work has created people. If we are to view things from the *materialist point of view*, we should state that work is the essential activity giving people goods by which they can survive i.e. provide themselves with meeting basic living needs: housing, food and clothes, but also with un-essential, luxury things such as travel, social status, etc. If we start thinking locally and view the notion of "work" (activity) in the context of Macedonia, the first thing coming to our minds is certainly to define work as a need to gain things necessary for living. While drafting this text, I have made interviews with several citizens having various education levels completed and various places of living, with the aim of detecting the essence of what Macedonians feel the notion of work means to them. In one of the interviewee groups, people were coming from rural environments having strict traditional habits, no education completed; people in this group said that, for them, work was something very important in life; they did not have any specialized education completed, they could not work within state administration, yet they worked at home: they cleaned, did the laundry, worked in the fields and thereby compensated for the fact that they could not contribute in the material sense of the word. As opposed to a person from this group stands a person from an urban environment having high level of education completed; they felt the same about work, yet with different connotation; for this person, too, work is one of the most important things in life, yet they said that through work and results achieved thereby they provide for material subsistence, prove themselves and create for themselves a certain social status and they basically could not tell whether they lived to work or worked to live. A person belonging to the young generation said they worked to earn money only on the basis of their own education level - for them; work is materially-based irrespective of current circumstances in the country. However, there are also people having the highest education level completed (doctors, engineers etc.) working as shop assistants, drivers, waiters- depending on who managed to get what job- and these people have accepted the situation in which they found themselves, not being ashamed to do any decent job. The following text offers an explanation on why that is so.

Like in any other country in the world, to everyone in Macedonia it is quite important to find a job and be paid for it in order to be able to meet basic needs mentioned. However, in Macedonia, such job is hard to find. This is a consequence of the transition of the social system i.e. the years during which a state is supposed to pass from one social system setup to another (from socialism to capitalism). This is the same as in times when the world was passing from feudalism to capitalism, from slaveholding to feudalism etc. Industry being a field in which people most often used to search for a job currently offers very limited chances indeed, due to changes already mentioned. Due to this fact, many people, both educated and uneducated, have been trying to find a job in countries needing labor force. EU has a great need of labor force as it has been facing a situation in which the number of old population is increasing and much higher than the number of work-able (young) population. This is a result of

decreased birth rate (natural growth) of the population. EU needs workers, and workers from transition countries and from developing countries need work. Yet, this creates a problem for countries these workers come from. If Macedonia has highly educated people and cannot find them jobs, such people start leaving for other countries. At the same time, Macedonia is not able to start up new facilities as there is nobody to develop, create, formulate them, and then work in them even if such facilities would be created, people's work in these facilities would be substantially less paid than the same work in, for instance, EU member states, the United States, Asia etc. Cul-de-sac! So, work as such is quite a broad notion, yet I have dwelled on the material aspect thereof only. Work can also be a hobby. It is how working can also be understood in Macedonia. *"Work for nothing, don't sit for nothing"* say people here.

ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF WORK

Naturally, *the work in Macedonia is appreciated* as in other parts of the world. Hard working people are especially appreciated by their closest family (as the smallest cell of society), as well as by the community. In the past, the hard work and willingness for working of a man was considered a benchmark for his success. During the times of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, after the liberation period in the aftermath of the Second World War, people worked on voluntary basis. There were the so called agricultural collectives where they voluntarily worked (weaved, knitted, worked in the fields) singing all the time. Although they were poor, they were happy and satisfied, helped each other and tried to make the others' work easier. A number of regional and national highways were built by means of volunteer actions as people put a lot of enthusiasm in the work that was derogated to them depending on their abilities and expertise. That was the previous situation, while nowadays this approach to work is abandoned and pale in the memories of people.

For people in Macedonia work primarily presents obligation and necessity. Only few are capable of aligning the obligation and necessity to pleasure. The society does not appreciate the hard working activities of an individual. On the contrary, if such feature is sensed with a person, they try to use it for individual purposes, and not for promotion in the company, the institution, etc. As I already mentioned, motivation for work exists only in terms of material necessity and need; only few are motivated to work for the mere love of the field (medicine, electrical engineering, economy, law, music...). Institution/company leaders have not been changed compared to the times of the former SFRY. The only change in their behavior can be found in the way they use their job positions for finding out ways and making plans to break the law, although there are honest exceptions who have based on and develop their powers with, especially their finance powers, hard work. I already mentioned the old saying *„Work voluntarily, do not stay idle”,* or *„Work makes man better, laziness worse”.*

UNEMPLOYMENT AND RELATED PROBLEMS

Unemployment and the low education level of most of socially endangered people have been the main causes of poverty in Macedonia. The reasons for such high unemployment rates should be first detected - and then the poverty problem should be defined. Poverty in Macedonia is sufficiently illustrated in the old and feeble faces of people begging in the streets of Skopje, or by abandoned and neglected villages - all constituting an image of social desolation in front of which nobody must close their eyes.

If we are to talk about *unemployment*, according to the latest analyses, there are around 400 000 unemployed people in Macedonia, which amounts for more than 40% of the total 2 500 000 inhabitants. There is no gender difference in the unemployment structure. There is no work both for male and female. This contributes to the creation of a widely spread „black market” or well known as the „grey economy”, and smuggling. People that have deeply penetrated these structures are working illegally in various fields for a minimal paycheck (less than 90 EURO per month), without payment for health and social insurance, with the fear whether at the end of the month they will be paid their miserable 90 EURO or will lose the job, while the employer will find another „victim” to labor for him in the course of the following month, and the story goes on because there is no institutional structures that will protect workers. On the other hand, due to the smuggling business that is boosting in Macedonia, many families are able to survive during the current month. When talking about black market, people often connect it with tobacco, alcohol, drugs smuggling and human trafficking, and in the past it was connected with fuel smuggling (during the embargo on Serbia). This is actually the fastest way for getting some money, i.e. earning a buck, which once again proves that the term „work” cannot be referred only to legal activities. Work is work and the fact whether it is legal or not is referring only to certain legal, judicial or what do I know measures. The social and health insurance is an inseparable part of the employed people’s status. Nevertheless, majority of them are deprived of it since they work on contractual basis. The Government, by means of legal acts is making efforts to regulate this field, but it does not always end in success.

The shutting down of the mines of “Sasa” and “Zletovo” has destroyed two mining towns in Macedonia. Having no work, no money and no hope of any better times to arrive, the inhabitants of these priory rich mining towns now think about two things: how to survive, and where to move out.

Times have changed. Here, women support men; women work and men cook at home.

Some 70 percent of the work-able population is jobless, official statistics show. The liquidation of the “Sasa” lead and zinc mine has made 1.100 miners jobless. The employees of a transport enterprise have also been laid off. Some 80 percent of the workers of a formerly successful textile factory are also

jobless. The only facilities now operational are several small private textile plants. Most of their workers are women.

These women work three shifts, 10-12 hours a day, for a monthly salary of four thousand denars (70 euro), frightened to death that the plant owner will lay them off. They grit their teeth and go on sewing because they will not find any other job. Their salary is the only source of income for a four-member family.

Not being able to overcome poverty, some 20 percent of the town's inhabitants have moved out. Some of them have returned to villages from which their parents originally moved out to come to town. Young people in great numbers go to Italy and Greece to work.

There are no conditions here for the development of agriculture or cattle breeding. People remaining in town have been managing their best. They work illegally or smuggle petty staff from Bulgaria, selling it afterwards in open markets.

Some families have moved to Canada forever. Others search for their luck in other towns throughout Macedonia – young males register for professional soldiers.

These mines created two towns. Now, the same mines have ruined the towns they originally created.

WORK AND HEALTH OF POPULATION

Working, that is, not working contributes both to the *mental and physical health* of the population in a country, in our case the population in Macedonia. The inability of people to work (while work is an inseparable part of the human nature) reflects on the relations within a family, within a society and on the political and economic situation in the country, as well as the ethnic stability. Unemployment makes people easily liable to various propaganda and influences, favoring crime, paramilitary activities, change and failure of moral norms and standards. Apathy present with the population results in change and deterioration of the physical and mental health of people. In highly developed societies, such as for example the Japanese society, workaholic behavior is common and people exhaust themselves from working. To be clear, there are such cases in our country as well, but they are in a far smaller number. In both cases (unemployment and hyperactivity) the population develops negative physical and mental traumas, and the number of people ending up on medical care is not an insignificant one.

PUBLIC OPINION AND FEELINGS

The objective and subjective impressions through public opinion reflections on this matter have been shown in the following daily newspaper story extracts (“Vreme”, 2004). *“Half a million people on the very verge of subsistence...”*. A man aged 50, tired of his life in poverty, persistently waits at the Skopje

Southern Boulevard for someone to offer him some work to do. Says he would be doing any job, only to earn some money and feed his four-member family. Used to work in the Skopje Bloomery, a former magnate in its kind, a factory for iron processing – now is on forced leave. For one year now, he, his wife and his two sons of legal age have been lacking money to survive. None of them works on a job, they don't receive any allowance from the Employment Office (each worker on a forced leave is entitled to a certain allowance provided for by the state), and they don't receive any social assistance whatsoever. *“My time has gone now; I haven't managed well in life. Now, everything I want is that at least my sons find a job; with the 300 denars (5 euro) that I daily – if at all – earn, we can't even make it to buy food enough for us all”* – says this man who curses his fate every day.

An interview with a worker in the eve of May 1st, the Labor Day. A graduated economist, tourism and catering, and management, worked for 29 years in “Metropol”. This company went into bankruptcy. He feels sorry for the days when workers used to work hard, but were well-paid.

- **“How do you feel now when the company you used to work in for many years went to bankruptcy and you don't go to work?”**

- *“I am really sorry that I don't go to work. I do want to work, although I have very little time left before I am retired. I have thirty-nine years working experience, of which even 29 years I spent working in “Metropol”. I liked my profession and was sincerely dedicated to my work. Another thing is the fact that we were paid regularly then. I now have to find ways to manage the month. Two years have passed, and I am still sorry that I lost my job; imagine how I felt back then!”*

-**“It is May 1 today, the day when we celebrate the international Labor Day. How did you celebrate this day when you were working?”**

- *“May 1 used to be a motivating holiday. On that day, each worker used to feel happy for having given own contribution to his/her company. This day meant a challenge for him/her; he/she would work more and eventually get promoted. There was festive mood among all people then. I remember when I was a child; May 1 was always a day of common joy. Parades were organized in the streets, it was celebrated by the unemployed as well, and especially by workers”.*

- **“What do you think about the greatest Labor Day nowadays?”**

- *“For those employed and for us, the 400 thousand unemployed people, the flags are the only remainder that our day is to be celebrated. Flags are hoisted every year to remind us of the holiday. I don't know whether there is any worker feeling that this is his/her day. None of the competent authorities takes any action to have this day celebrated in a dignified manner, as it should be the case.”*

-**“What is the future of Macedonian workers?”**

- *“Macedonia has a real problem with unemployment, with salaries and deductions not paid to workers. Nothing has been changed for a long time now; the situation is even getting worse. Real people for the*

job are needed, having specific suggestions and solutions, able to manage the country. Macedonia does have a potential, quality labor force and resources. Its leaders should know how to use this potential. If this does not happen, young educated people will be forced to leave. I have a friend that went to live abroad ten years ago. I told him then we would miss Macedonia. He said to me: "I will accept and embrace the country that will acknowledge me as belonging to it. I work for a state because it pays me back."

A man aged forty-five, receives social assistance of two thousand denars (30 euro a month); stands each and every day in the Southern Boulevard offering to work with his two hands and do any work to buy food for his wife and children; lives in a house with no windows, no heating; his children go to school wearing old and worn-out clothes. He spends all his days outside his home; he comes here every day and waits for someone to come and offer him any petty job so he could earn at least three hundred denars per day (5 euro), and he is not the only one to do so. At that same place, many other men come and offer their labor, as much as their exhausted bodies allow them to. They hardly speak of their problems, being afraid of the situation getting even worse than this.

"I come here every day, and there is only little work to find. Fifteen days I go home with no money earned and one day I go home taking thirty denars I have earned that day. I can't buy food, and I can't spend any money to pay the bills. My house is falling apart, my children have grown up and have nothing to wear", says one of them.

All these people stand in the street in winter and in summer, ready to do any work whatsoever. Most often, they help in loading furniture with people moving; they dig soil, even graves. Their hands are chapped with cold, yet they don't refuse any work they are offered to do. They pray each day to find something to work and earn money to buy bread for their families.

In the labor street, whole families are offering themselves to anyone giving them something to work. They stand in the street from early morning and wait for someone to come and offer them something to work; it has never been worse than now. Some of them fear that even worse times than these may come. They appeal to politicians to start thinking about those who want to work and live as they are definitely entitled to it. They will all be here, on their "work place", tomorrow as well, and nobody knows if they will earn some money to buy bread.

EFFORTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

“The bread earned by sincere and hard work is sweeter”- popular saying in Macedonia.

“If you want to have a successful company, you don’t have to be a member of a political party, you should believe that through hard work you can earn yourself a good standard”- says the owner of “Zavar Company”, a private Skopje company, a welding M.A., who started working in 1988, in the basement of the family house. He borrowed money from his friends to buy his first welding machine, yet in only three years he has managed to develop a large facility.

At the beginning, he worked for 16 hours a day, slept very little, yet believed that he would succeed. His leading idea in his work is the recognition of the fact that the only correct way to use his knowledge for him is hard work. He manufactures stainless steel equipment and does welding.

- *“There is a possibility for successful companies to exist in Macedonia” - says he. “Everyone should just know and mind own business. You should work hard, and the most important thing is for you to be sincere. You don’t have to lie or steal to succeed. Then, your bread will taste better”, adds he.*

This company has 26 employees, they are all regularly paid and, together with their owners, they work towards achieving their work goals with satisfaction and courage. “Zavar Company” has one main goal, which is continuous development in line with latest achievements in welding technology and manufacturing stainless steel equipment.

WOMEN POSITION IN THE COUNTRY

“Gloomy Turkish time!” is often said with a sigh by macho men from the Balkans, raised to the pedestal of the *“law”*. If the gentleman-developer of this thought had thought a little, he would have concluded that, in that time, women remained at home wearing sliver slippers and silver clothing, eating cookies and being respected by their masters - Turks. Our *“Turks”*, however, now force their women to work, spend their salaries, indebt them with credits, expect from them to prepare them lunch and provide them with other practical services, like washing and ironing, for instance.

Men today are nostalgic about that time when their mothers and grandmothers were obedient and quiet, and loudly quote a Macedonia proverb that *“a woman is to be f...ed and beaten”* and state the formula of *“pact in domus”*. It quite understands that such *“heroes”* will mind emancipated and smart women that will educate themselves and will work will know what they want and will be the makers of their own destiny.

DISCUSSIONS

The work is one of the most important parts of our lives. Meaning of the work in our three countries is similar in some points: work means job, some tasks to do, work place and working conditions. In Macedonia some obligations or tasks being outside could be called as work as well. The words “rabota” (*in russ.*), “darbas” (*in lith.*), “rabota” (*in maced.*) are used for the expression an action or occupation or having a job. If we translate the word “work” from Russian, Lithuanian or Macedonian into English – several words for that could be used – work, job or occupation. We can conclude that even we are speaking different languages; meaning of the “work” is similar.

According to the sayings in different countries attitudes to the work could be expressed in positive or negative ways. In the past job security gave the less value for workplace – everyone was provided and secured with the work for the life time. People were encouraged to work and even having a job was an obligation. Manual work was the most valuable in the society during Soviet Union time. The Trade Unions were strong. People were very interactive in the workplaces, leisure activities were common and the collective work was the most important.

Due to political economical changes, attitudes and values of work changed, presently people put efforts to perform better in order to keep their work positions. Manual work became less respected than before, those who have no qualification have a few opportunities to be employed legally. With a starting of market economy industry was not efficient any more. Many of the factories were closed which created unemployment for thousands of the people.

Agriculture sector took bigger share of economy at that time and had a higher value. During the seasons of the harvest, students and employees from urban areas were encouraged to contribute to agriculture sector. These activities created interactive relationships among employees. Presently agriculture sector destroyed, as there was no political commitment in the sector during the last decades. Due to that, attitudes and values to agriculture work dramatically decreased and greater movement of the workforce to the urban areas occurred. At the same time, new professions were developed, but mostly in service providing sector which was the opportunity to employ some of new comers from rural areas.

In general, attitudes to the work changed and work become more valuable among the people in all our countries. It became harder to find a workplace whatsoever and in many cases people are ready to accept any kind of job, for instance, in Moldova.

Unemployment was experienced conditions for the population in our countries. According to the statistics of the Lithuania unemployment rate is a few time less in comparison with Moldova and Macedonia. In the latter countries up to half and three quarters of the working labour force respectively is unemployed and despite of that no special institutions for re-qualification were created to the needed extent. Social security benefits for the unemployed were ridiculously limited in all our countries.

Lithuanian Labour Exchange at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and its 46 local labour exchange offices began their activities on 1991. Lithuanian Labour Exchange implements state employment guarantees on labour market, provides assistance for job seekers in finding job, provides employers with necessary skilled labour force, involves registered job seekers into population employment programs (vocational training and retraining, organization of own business, placement into public works and works financed from the Employment Fund, establishment of new jobs, activities of job clubs) and pays unemployment benefits.

Tripartite commissions functioning on a voluntary basis are set up at the labour exchanges for the consideration of issues concerning the population employment. The commissions consist of representatives of trade unions, employers and public authorities.

In Moldova and Macedonia unemployed were left mostly for themselves and many of them joined "gray economy" in many cases becoming the victims of such activities. Internal job market is developing slowly in all of our countries giving a little opportunities and hope for unemployed people as well as environment for foreign investments is not attracted enough. Practically little commitment of the Government is seen to reduce the problem of unemployment.

Comparing the health of population of our countries, we looked at the official data on health indicators and their trends over the time; tried to find possible association of work hazards or unemployment and health. Such association is highly studied within developed countries.

Unfortunately in our young countries there is limited amount of such epidemiological studies on the issue, although many reports conducted by different institutions prove that health of the population is definitely determined by poor socio-economical conditions. Due to the limited labour market, work has gotten greater value, putting people to the stragglng for it even over their own health. Lack of strong Social Security systems, high level of unemployment and often poor working conditions influence population's health in all our countries. Moreover, psychological health and its deterioration by job insecurity are little studied in our countries. In Macedonia, many qualified people prefer to volunteer over being unemployed, in order not to lose qualification, hoping for better future.

Health self-assessment evaluation survey of professionals within health care field in Lithuania showed that half of health care workers consider their health as moderate and less than a half – as good. Moreover, exposure to stress at workplace was assessed as very high. We could not access similar studies about health of health care professionals in Moldova and Macedonia to be compared with Lithuanian one, but from personal experience we can state that psychological health of health care professionals is influenced to the great extent by work and its conditions.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

Our work put a light on the perception of things, expressed in different languages we are using. We realized that the meaning of word can be much wider and possess somewhat different value within different geographical settings. In our work we met many obstacles due to the lack of information on the topic and studies on interculturality. In many cases reliability was questionable as well. Still we believe that we became aware and more sensitive with words and their meaning in foreign languages, as well as looked at the meaning if topic related words in our own differently; this will contribute to the future development of the partnership in various domains among our countries. Having performed this investigation we realized how important subject we learnt, especially in the content of new European Union Policy.

GLOSSARY

Culture – 1) material, intellectual, artistic formation which exists as reality of values; 2) a learned worldview or paradigm shared by a population or group and transmitted socially that influences values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors, and is reflected in the language, dress, food, materials, and social institutions of a group.

Determinants of health are characteristics and parameters that affect the presence and development of risk factors for diseases.

Employment rate – represents the persons in employment as a percentage of the population of the age-group covered by the survey.

Health is a result of the action of various factors of social, economic, general and working environment, and the principal precondition for contented life of humans.

Labour force - the sum of persons in employment; plus the unemployed.

Personal interests, attitudes and values - measures passion and the values that drive behavior and provide an understanding of the passions that move a person into action and provide purpose and direction in their lives.

Psychological harassment (mobbing) is an old phenomenon present in many workplaces, caused by deterioration of interpersonal relations as well as organizational dysfunctions.

Unemployed – 1) persons of a given age who did not have a job on a given week, were ready to begin working within two weeks upon finding it, have been actively seeking for a paid job for four weeks in various ways: applied to a state or private labour exchange; applied to employers directly; asked friends and relatives for help; while seeking for a job, attended construction sites, markets, unofficial labour exchanges; looked for premises and equipment for their business; attempted to obtain a patent, license or credit; 2) jobless persons of working age other than full time students of educational institutions, who have registered, according to place of residence, in the National Labour Exchange as jobseekers and ready to accept the offered job or to study in order to acquire an occupation.

Unemployment - is defined by the indices representing the number of unemployed and the unemployment level.

Unemployment rate –the ratio of the unemployed to the labour force.

Value – 1) an entity with an expression of content and form or as spiritual formation with a meaning of truth, beauty, and well; 2) a value may be defined as an enduring belief, a specific way of behaving or 'of being', which is preferable to any other.

Value system - a complex set of interrelated values in each aspect of the life.

Work - 1) an inherent aspect of our personality to test, express and extend our skills through it; 2) the human activity seeking to create the goodies.

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards and employee, or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety.

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