I. NEW REGULATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON NATIONAL WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION (WHP)
The changes in the political, social and economic situation in Bulgaria, generally described as transition from “socialistic welfare state policy” to “market oriented state policy” - establishment of new industrial relations, the reform in the public health and health care sector, and the EU accession process imposed restructuring the system for provision of health and safety at work. As a result of systematic efforts of governmental bodies in the period 1995-2000, at present:

1. Bulgaria has approved general guidelines for state policy in providing safe and healthy working conditions, including WHP. (1990) (Build healthy public policy - Ottawa charter).

2. Bulgaria has new OHS-legislation (basic Act on healthy and safe working conditions-1997, AHSWC, and related Statutory Ordinances) harmonized with ILO Conventions (No81, 161, etc.) and EU framework (89/391/EEC) and specific directives. This fact was proved by statements of EU official bodies. The legal basis could be improved, but is now sufficient for creating conditions and stimulating WHP (Reorient health services - Ottawa).

3. The reforms in state, economy and public sectors are in advanced stage and most probably will ensure future circumstances, like in EU countries. At present, many current changes are creating more obstacles and difficulties than support, namely: company reorganizations; changes in the companies owners and employers (privatization); changes in company management personnel; liquidation of enterprises and even industrial sectors; financial constraints; etc.

4. Regardless of the generally bad status of national economy, at local level the companies situation is mosaic - parallely to degrading, there are companies in progress. Many companies - members of the National Network of health and safety promoting companies (NNHSPC) are enlarging their production, staff and ambitions to be in compliance with current OHS-legislation, including WHP. These members are forming a supportive environment for creating national models of good practice in WHP in accordance to European ones. The creative role of WHP experts is to propose a rational way for implementation of these models considering some adaptation to current organizational, social and psychologic situation.

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE BACKGROUND SITUATION
A positive fact is the establishment of new organization on the basis of AHSWC: At the end of year 2000, organizational structure at national, regional and local level of the System for occupational health and safety (SOHS), postulated by the new AHSWC, was set up formally (see Figure 1). In the SOHS, WHP - initiative and activities should have:

- National level - Ministry of Health (MoH), National Center of Hygiene, Medical Ecology and Nutrition (NCHMEN), NGO’s.
- Regional level - Regional and Municipal Working Conditions Councils (R/MWCC), Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspectorates (HEI), NGO’s.
- Local level - Occupational Health Services (OHSer), Company Working Conditions Committees (WCCom), NGO’s, Companies providing expert services, experts.

The second positive fact is a successful step by step organization of supporting non-governmental initiatives (national and local).

Taking into account the model of European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP) (membership from 1 June 1999), the National Network of Health and Safety Promoting Companies (NNHSPC) with a logo “Quality, Health and Safety in the XXI Century” was initiated on the basis of signed Agreement by the Bulgarian Government represented by the MoH and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP), NGO of employers - Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA) and NCHMEN. At NCHMEN, a National Contact Office (NCO) was organized. Inaugural Meeting of representatives from initiating organizations and companies applying on voluntary basis for
membership in NNHSPC and National Information day were held on 16th of November 1999, after organizational work of the NCO and Social marketing campaign.

All companies - members of the NNHSPC conformed with the prerequisites to present signed documents:
1. A declaration for adopting the international (European) principles and good practices as described by the Luxembourg declaration (1997), Cardiff Memorandum (1998) and other publications of the ENWHP (translated and published in Bulgarian).
2. A declaration for good will to undertake voluntary initiatives and agreements leading to good practices in occupational health and safety (OHS) to ensure conditions and support for employees participation (WHP) and team work on pilot Network projects including experience, practices and information exchange with other Network member-companies.
3. Official decisions for active participation in Network initiatives and election of company co-ordinator by the company WCCom.
4. Additional information on OHS- company situation and policy.

The NNHSPC comprises (by 1st of November 2001):
- four initiating organizations;
- seven members of honour organizations contributing for a successful Network activity: Ministry of Economy, two trade-unions, three regional HEI and one private OHS;
- thirty one member-companies employing above 50000 workers;
- authorized officially 70 key professionals and experts as members of Network coordinating Committee, of NCO or as employers and company coordinators.

III. ACTIVITIES OF NNHSPC DURING YEAR 2000

They were grouped in two priority areas:
1. Marketing of WHP and the European practice as presented in the information from ENWHP e.g. Models of good practice, Final report - 1998 of the Liaison Office of ENWHP, Quality Criteria, Questionnaire for self assessment, etc., by:
   a) Seven issues of the Bulletin for Express Information “Occupational Health. Workplace Health Promotion” (BEI “OH.WHP”) (ISSN 1311-2031).
   c) NCO issued in Bulgarian, with financial support of WHO, two important books of WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, Bilthoven:
   d) Education and training materials, largely used during:
      - Education and training courses and seminars of company coordinators and key managers in NNHSPC.
      - Education of members of companies’ WCCom and key managers. In 2000 the “Working conditions” fund supported two large programs led by the BIA in collaboration with NCHMEN (for employers’ representatives in WCCom) and Trade Unions (TU) (for workers’ representatives in WCCom). NCO participated actively in the program of BIA.
      - Education of physicians in occupational medicine in 1-month course at NCHMEN to achieve rights to establish and register OHS as temporary manager. This course was organized by NCHMEN on modular principle with NCO-participation in WHP-module.
   e) NCO prepared a presentation of the Network in Internet site.
   f) NNHSPC was presented by information to the National Working Conditions Council (NWCC).

2. Support for Network members in their process to achieve compliance to the new legislation by training and informing key persons and company coordinators and by
initiating supporting, evaluating and giving publicity to model pilot projects solving priority problems in individual companies - members of NNHSPC.

a. In the beginning of year 2000 were finalized local visits in member - companies for personal contact with employer and company coordinator; information on Network goal, objectives and activities; discussion on organizational issues and detailization according to specific status of the company; needs assessment.

b. Needs assessment procedure was in the Agenda of organized by NCO Second working meeting of company coordinators (14 - 15.03.2000, Targovishte) with educational session “Strategies in WHP and practical approaches to ensure workers participation”, symposium “Quality management principles according to ISO ser. 9000 and quality management in health and safety at workplace activities”, and planning session. Three proposals were prepared jointly:

- “Programme of NNHSPC - activities for the year 2000”
- “Programme 2000 for education of company coordinators and key managers”;
- Proposal to all member companies to discuss the interest of their high bodies for management and register jointly an Association for Workplace Health and Safety Promotion as NGO - juridical person.

c. Methodological activity and joint pilot projects: Members of NCO prepared and issued the methodological book cited before. Many particular WHP techniques were introduced in that methodology. This basic procedure was implemented by joint pilot projects in the practice of four companies - members of the Network: “Kotlostroene” AG, Sofia, “Alucom” AG, Pleven, “Centromet” AG, Vratza and “Energia” AG, Targovishte. By these projects were solved practically three of six general activities in the Programme of NNHSPC, namely:

- Approach to realize self-control and document the compliance with new AHSWC and related legislation.
- Basic procedure for workplace assessment, occupational risk assessment and management.
- Questionnaire and procedure to investigate worker's assessment and opinions on workplace health and safety conditions.

IV. OBSTACLES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Identified obstacles:

1. The predominant authoritarian style of management in the country is a main problem. It includes bureaucratic approaches to solve OHS-problems thus limiting the workers participation. There exists a potential threat in companies - the new OHS-legislation to be introduced only by enforcement (labour inspectorate) and bureaucratic means, thus losing an essential element of sustainability - active participation of all company staff (WHP). This potential threat is focusing the present activity of the NNHSPC at local level on strengthening companies community action; developing methods combining AHSWC and WHP principles and local personal skills; enabling, mediating and advocating WHP activity and activists as working for the company success, and creating supportive environment (Ottawa Charter). This issue is a general problem of national health promotion activity.

2. Insufficient interest in WHP activities, confidence, motivation and common language between Network partners. Like in every new activity, the interest, confidence, motivation and common language are function of communication, time, funds and practical beneficial realizations. To cut a “vicious circle”, a decision is taken to combine WHP approaches with the workplace assessment, occupational risk assessment, communication and management - a key problem for companies in the beginning of 2001, related to AHSWC - compliance. The projects at local level leading to company benefits by the most direct way were formulated as priority action and successfully implemented.

3. Lack of governmental financial support and legal status of the Network. The National Network was existing as a group of companies and people sharing similar ideas. In 2000 it became more and more evident, that this structure had to be registered as an juridical person with its own bank account and possibilities to generate and keep income for use in activities beneficial for the society.

Identified facilitating factors:
1. Contacts and collaboration with European producers, contractors and consumers, and the ISO 9000 certification/building company quality management system are facilitating factors. Those are really working ways for knowledge and training in EU good WHP practice and its beneficial effects on company success.

2. Many attempts to organize short education on WHP for chief managers-employers were not successful. They were busy, could learn only by participating/doing and be motivated only in achieving practical benefits. Networking seems to be reasonable method which could realize those prerequisites.

3. No obstacles were found in working together with workers considering their health and safety, especially during workplace assessment, occupational risk assessment, communication and management. In addition, this procedure is generating attractive goals for group work (WHP).

V. ACTIVITIES AND SITUATION AT THE END OF YEAR 2001

In addition to ongoing activities (see III, 1a, 1d, 2c), three major realizations happened during 2001:

1. Registration and organization of Association “Workplace Health and Safety Promotion (A"WHSP") - juridical person, from within members of NNHSPC on voluntary basis.

   Inaugural meeting by the initiative of 7 companies (juridical persons) and 7 experts took place in Pleven (8-9th of January 2001) to start this process. An Action plan and five priorities for Year 2001 were discussed and approved, too. After numerous bureaucratic procedures, in August 2001 the Association “Workplace Health and Safety Promotion (A"WHSP")” - "nongovernmental, nonprofit organization for activities beneficial for the society", juridical person, was registered by the Pleven court and in the special National register to the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice.

2. Discussion on future cooperation between A"WHSP" and the NNHSPC was in the Agenda of the Third working meeting of company coordinators (26-28th of September 2001 - Targovishte) together with educational session “Legal arrangements related to OHS; new legislative document on occupational diseases; workplace and occupational risk assessment and management - basic methodology”, symposium “Practical implementation and results of workplace and occupational risk assessment procedures in member-companies” and planning session. Three proposals were prepared jointly:
   - Programme of activities for the year 2002 (Catalog 2002 for joint projects).
   - Programme 2002 for education and training of company coordinators and key managers.
   - Proposal to combine activity of NNHSPC with those of newly registered A"WHSP" by new organizational form “Association "WHSP" and NNHSPC”: on the basis of the leading role of management bodies of the Association and joint goals. Network members could joint Association or keep a Network membership on their choice. Governmental organizations could arrange joint activities by Agreement with the Association (see Figure 2).

3. After negotiations, the Association management board accepted that proposal and included the formal procedure and organization in his Plan. Approval of Contract for collaborative activities between the “Association and Network” and NCHMEN was the first formal step. The Bulgarian NCO is in the centre of that organization as executive bureau, situated according to the Contract in the NCHMEN, Sofia as by now.

Four main goals were achieved during years 1999 - 2001 in the area of nongovernmental support of WHP in the frame of SOSH in Bulgaria:

1. Confidence, dialogue, negotiations, team work, joint projects and activities on the basis of mutual interest and use of internal resources in the NNHSPC. This is a platform for WHP future activities.

2. Confidence and participation of employers in the networking activities during the process of establishing Association "WHSP".

3. Increasing the sustainability of the National Network by joining it to a juridical person A"WHSP".

4. Identification of a number of current priority areas (of mutual interest) for WHP in Bulgaria by a participatory approach.
This could be a good basis for voluntary and democratic OHS-WHP Coalition.

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Used Abbreviations:

A"OHS" - Associations of Occupational Health Services
ASE - Associations of Safety engineers
A"WHSP" + NNHSPC - Association “Workplace Health and Safety Promotion” and National Network of Health and Safety Promoting Companies
AHSWC - Act on Healthy and Safe Working Conditions
AM - Association Members
ANM - Association and Network Members
B/RWCC - Branch/Regional Working Conditions Councils
BIA - Bulgarian Industrial Association
BIS - Bulgarian Institute for Standartization
CPS - Civil Protection Service
CPUNE - Committee for Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy
D"WCMCAR" - Department “Working Conditions, Management at Crisis and Alternative recruitment”
D "RLI" - Directorate “Regional Labour Inspectorate”
E - Experts
EA"GLI" - Executive Agency “General Labour Inspectorate”
ENWHP - European Network of Workplace Health Promotion
EU - European Union
F"WC" - Fund “Working Conditions”
F"OAOD" - Fund “Occupational Accident and Occupational Disease”
FPS - Fire Precaution Service
GD"ISTS" - General Directorate “Inspection for State Technical Supervision”
GP’s - General Practicioners
HCS - Health Care Services
HEI - Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspectorate
HS - High Schools
I - Inspectorate of CPUNE
IEA - Industrial - Economic Association - Regional Organization of BIA
ILO - International Labour Organization
MAF-TI - Ministry of Agriculture and Forests - Inspectorate for Technical Supervision
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCT</td>
<td>Ministry of Communications and Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>MES</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science</td>
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<td>MEW</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment and Waters</td>
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<td>Ministry of Internal Affairs</td>
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<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</td>
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<td>NC</td>
<td>National Centre</td>
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<td>National Centre of Hygiene, Medical Ecology and Nutrition</td>
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<td>National Insurance Institute</td>
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<td>National Medical Expert Commission</td>
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<td>Occupational Health Service</td>
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<td>RC</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
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<td>RIEW</td>
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<td>RITS</td>
<td>Regional Inspectorate for Technical Supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMEC</td>
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<td>Regional Technical Inspectorate</td>
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<td>Regional Trade Union Organizations</td>
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<td>State Agency “Civil Protection”</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>State Agency for Metrology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHWS</td>
<td>“Safety and Health at Work” Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOHS</td>
<td>System for Occupational Health and Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Services Providing Company</td>
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<td>TI</td>
<td>Technical Inspectorate to MCT</td>
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Figure 1. Scheme of the National System for Occupational Health and Safety Management (NSOHSM)
Figure 2.
General Scheme of joining the National Network of Health and Safety Promoting Companies to the Association „Workplace Health and Safety Promotion (A „WHSP“ and NNHSPC).}

Abbreviations: GA - General Assembly
MB - Management board
EB - Executive Bureau, National Contact Office
EC - Expert Committee