

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000848/25
to the Commission
Alexander Bernhuber (PPE)
(26 February 2025)**

Subject: Inconsistencies in published occupational-accident statistics

Referencing by the Commission in its reporting focuses on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in the area of 'safety and health at work'. The questioner has noticed inconsistencies in published occupational-accident statistics, however, which raise questions as to quality assurance relating to the underlying data, as there are also extreme fluctuations in values within the EU. With regard to United Nations data, information is needed on verification, on quality (about which there are doubts) and on how discrepancies are dealt with.

1. Does the Commission, in particular Eurostat, independently verify the data provided by the United Nations and, if so, are the verification results made publicly available?
2. In the specific case of 'Occupational Accident Statistics', has the Commission ever identified discrepancies or voiced the suspicion that the published data may be incorrect or incomplete, and how can the Commission explain the fact that in Romania, for instance, there are only 71 'non-fatal occupational injuries per 100 000 workers' and in France 2 800 and in Denmark over 3 000 'non-fatal occupational injuries per 100 000 workers'?
3. How does the Commission intend to proceed in this case in order to ensure the quality and plausibility of the data, and what measures are in place for verification or for coordination with data providers, e.g. with national statistical offices, the ILO or the United Nations?

Submitted: 26.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr Dombrovskis on behalf of the European Commission
(22 April 2025)**

There are two sets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators: those of the United Nations ⁽¹⁾ (UN) and those of the EU. Both aim to measure progress towards achieving the SDGs, but differ in scope, focus, and application. Thus, the EU SDG indicator list ⁽²⁾ is tailored and coordinated but not fully aligned with the global indicator list.

The UN SDG indicators are entirely managed by the UN, either countries produce the indicators and report directly to UN, i.e. not through the Commission, or the UN or its agencies (such as FAO) produce the data without intervention of the countries. In no case the Commission verifies those SDG data sent to the UN or produced by the UN.

However, if the countries send the same data both to the Commission and UN, the Commission verifies the data received. This happens e.g. if there are EU regulations requiring the EU Member States to report such data to the statistical office of the EU (Eurostat).

The European Statistics on Accidents at Work (ESAW) ⁽³⁾ data come from administrative sources. Eurostat receives ESAW data from national authorities based on the employers' declarations of accidents at work.

As specified in the European reference metadata ⁽⁴⁾, a significant issue for the accuracy of ESAW is assumed to be the under-reporting of accidents ⁽⁵⁾.

The incidence of fatal accidents at work is considered more accurate for cross-country comparisons than the non-fatal accident rate and hence used in the EU SDG indicator list.

Data on accidents at work are produced using a common methodology ⁽⁶⁾. Eurostat and Member States are working to address comparability issues in Commission expert groups.

The Commission has no influence on national data submitted to international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the UN.

⁽¹⁾ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs>

⁽²⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/overview>

⁽³⁾ Based on <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2011/349/oj/eng>

⁽⁴⁾ Further detailed in the reference metadata of the dataset https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/hsw_acc_work_esms.htm

⁽⁵⁾ It is possible that certain accidents that should have been reported were in fact not, e.g. if enterprises or workers are not aware of the obligation/possibility to notify or if they are afraid of the consequences of notification such as possible state investigations and requirements to invest in health and safety.

⁽⁶⁾ European Statistics on Accidents at Work (ESAW) — Summary methodology — 2013 edition — Products Manuals and Guidelines — Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/ks-ra-12-102>