



SafeHabitus

PRESS RELEASE | SafeHabitus report on occupational health and safety data

EU Commissioner McGuinness launches SafeHabitus report highlighting serious gaps in occupational health and safety data

Dublin, 12 November 2024 - Groundbreaking research conducted as part of the EU funded SafeHabitus project highlights significant gaps in the data on EU farm fatalities. While official Eurostat figures report an average of 315 occupational deaths on farms annually, the true number is estimated to be over 70% higher, amounting to at least 545 fatalities each year.

Speaking at the launch of the SafeHabitus report 'EU Farm Safety Statistics: Do all farmers count' **Commissioner Mairead McGuinness** stated "During my time in the European Parliament, I highlighted the pressing need for enhanced occupational health and safety data for the agricultural sector. The findings presented in this report significantly advance our understanding of the true scope of farm-related injuries and fatalities affecting farmers and farm workers across the EU. This comprehensive data is essential in building a foundation of evidence-based policy options, helping us realise the vision set out in the recently published Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture—to cultivate a resilient, diverse, and attractive agricultural sector for the future."

Dr Mart Reinvee (EULS), the lead author of the report, explained that "A major reason for the discrepancy is the exclusion of self-employed farmers and family members from the data reported by many member states to Eurostat each year. This is because the ESAW methodology allows Member States to decide if they report occupational fatalities or injuries affecting self-employed farmers and farm workers."

Dr John McNamara (Teagasc) who leads the work programme on improving risk management, highlighted that "Only 13 of the 27 EU member states report occupational injuries and fatalities affecting self-employed farmers and family workers. Four states report a limited amount of information for these workers. Nine member states only provide data for people classified as employees. This means that, at the very minimum, occupational deaths and injuries relating to over 47% of the total population of self-employed farmers and family workers in the EU are excluded from the Eurostat data."

Dr David Meredith (Teagasc), the leader of the SafeHabitus project stated that the lack of quality statistical data to inform EU and national policies and strategies is a serious issue that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. "The absence of these data means that we do not know the true scale of the challenge facing farmers and farm families. There are a range of steps that can be taken by both the EU and member states ranging from modifying the ESAW methodology to account for the unique nature of the farm workforce in the EU through to using EU data collection systems such as the Farm Sustainability Data Network or the Agricultural Census." Dr Meredith concluded by thanking Commissioner McGuinness for her long-standing support for improvements in farmer health and farm safety, particularly in her various roles and positions within the EU Parliament.

The SafeHabitus Report on Farm Workplace accidents can be found [here](#).

More information:

[EU Farm Safety Statistics: Do all farmers count?](#)

[SafeHabitus Report | Farm safety in the EU: Which injuries, and who is counted?](#)

For media inquiries, please contact:

- **Dr Märt Reinvee**, Estonian University of Life Sciences, mart.reinvee[at]emu.ee
- **Dr John McNamara**, Teagasc, john.g.mcnamara[at]teagasc.ie
- **David Meredith** for information regarding the SafeHabitus Project activities: david.meredith[at]teagasc.ie

About the SafeHabitus Project

SafeHabitus is Horizon Europe project that aims to strengthen Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems (FHS KIS) and support the EU transition to social sustainability in farming. Through novel methods and a collaborative approach, the project aims to advance safer practices on farms across the EU.

Website

www.safehabitus.eu

Social media

[LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

Newsletter

[Subscribe here.](#)