

## Conference Report

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### *Annual Spring Conference of the GfA and XVIIth Annual Conference of the ISOES*

#### **Annual Spring Conference of the GfA on Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Gesellschaft für Arbeitswissenschaft (GfA) and XVIIth Annual Conference of the International Society for Occupational Ergonomics and Safety (ISOES)**

*7–9 May 2003, Munich, Germany*

For decades, the Spring Conference of the Gesellschaft für Arbeitswissenschaft (GfA) has been an important yearly forum where work scientists and ergonomists from German, Austrian, and Swiss research institutes and universities meet to exchange experiences and ideas on current issues and problems of ergonomics and work science. Additionally, occupational physicians and personnel responsible for occupational health and safety of the workforce, as well as staff in charge of work planning in companies, and members of professional associations, trade unions, mutual insurance associations, and government agencies have actively participated in these conferences or, at least, have used them as an important source of information exchange. They are, of course, mostly interested in knowledge of work design that is applicable to real-life situations. Ergonomics, as an applied and interdisciplinary science, with its goal of comprehensive work design, is, of course, expected to develop and provide methods and procedures as well as proven (best practice) examples for the analysis, assessment, and the ergonomic and economically justifiable designs of workplaces including work tools, work courses, work contents, and working environment. This is also true for product-ergonomic, i.e., user-friendly, developments and research activities.

Similar objectives have been pursued by the Annual Conferences of the International Society for Occupational Ergonomics and Safety (ISOES), a society which was founded almost twenty years ago by renowned researchers from North America. Remarkably enough, the current President of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) – the world-wide umbrella of the national ergonomics societies – was one of the “founding fathers” of the “International Foundation for Industrial Ergonomics and Safety Research,” which led to the founding of the ISOES.

The year 2003 proved extraordinary since it marked a half century since the founding of the GfA, the second-oldest ergonomic society in Europe after the Ergonomics Society of Great Britain. To celebrate this anniversary, the GfA and ISOES decided several years ago to host a Joint International Conference in Munich with plans for the founding of the “Federation of European Ergonomics Societies” (FEES).

The Conference attracted about 350 participants from all over the world. Even though contributions came from scientists and practitioners involved in “work and organization” and “social aspects of work” and covered various areas of micro and macro ergonomics as well as product and production ergonomics, they all had a common objective: to create productive, healthy, and safe working conditions. Work must be designed under continuously changing economic and ecological conditions. Business processes must be managed in a socially responsible way, and company-specific qualification measures for the workforce must be undertaken by using work-scientific know-how. In addition to traditional paid work in an industrial setting, work science today must also address, among other things, the design of teleworking

and work in the service sector, as well as the “How?” of unpaid work in the household, family, and in society. Last, but not least, solving social problems via a work policy which is based on the human capital requires a strong involvement of work science.

Because this Conference was a bilingual one, the papers were presented in either German or English in the individual sessions. In order to enhance the international exchange of information, also papers which were presented orally in German are printed in English.

The Conference Proceedings entitled “Quality of Work and Products in Enterprises of the Future” – “Qualität von Arbeit und Produkt in Unternehmen der Zukunft” (edited by STRASSER, H.; KLUTH, K.; RAUSCH, H. and H. BUBB) have been published by Ergonomia Verlag oHG/Stuttgart (1100 pages, ISBN 3-935089-68-6, €59)