

B/97/M6

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD, 17 NOVEMBER 1997

Present

M.Weber (Chairman), Dr Asherson, M.Wilders, Mr Haigh, M.Boisnel, M. Richard, Mr Konkolewsky, Sr.Pijuan, Mr Sheye and Ms Valentiny (minutes secretary).

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Sr.Gómez-Hortigüela, Mr Larsson and Mr Carlslund

A points

Item 1: Adoption of the revised draft agenda (B/97/A4)

2. The revised draft agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 15-16 September 1997 (B/97/M5)

3. Mr Haigh asked for a clearer explanation of A and B points and there was some discussion about having A and B points for both the Board and the Bureau. The Chairman confirmed that the Bureau can change any items on the Board agenda from an A point to a B point, if they considered it to be necessary.

4. The Chairman also raised the question of the term of office of the Chairman in future and various proposals were discussed.

It was agreed that future Bureau agendas would not be divided into A and B points (Action point 1: Secretariat). It was also agreed that the term of office of the Chairman should be for one year, which means from the end of the November meeting in one year to the end of the November meeting in the next year.

Item 3: Action points arising from the minutes (B/97/24)

5. There were no comments about the action points.

B points

Item 4: Preparation for the Administrative Board meeting, 18-19 November 1997.

6. The members discussed the papers tabled for the Board meeting and the following points were made.

Improving the financial management (A/97/11)

7. It was agreed that some of the papers are rather complex, especially those on budget issues, and it was important for the Bureau and the Board to be clear about what they were being asked to do. Bureau members discussed the need for the Agency to provide a short introduction to complex Board papers. Members also asked the Agency to prepare a presentation for the next Bureau meeting on the Agency's financial management system.

It was agreed that the Agency would provide a short presentation on the Agency's financial management system at the next Bureau meeting and also provide a short, clear introduction to budget papers for the Board (Action point 2: Secretariat)

Agency rules on Freedom of Information (A/97/12)

8. There was some uncertainty about whether the rules laid down by the Ombudsman were applicable to the Agency itself or to its Focal Point network as well.

The Director agreed to look into this point and it was agreed that the paper for the February 1998 Board meeting would specifically relate to the Bilbao Agency. (Action point 3: Secretariat)

Expenses for Board members and expenses for expert groups (A/97/13)

9. As this had been discussed and agreed at earlier meetings, there was no further discussion.

Review of Mandates for the Bureau (A/97/21)

10. The paper was discussed and agreed.

Appointment of new accounting officer

11. The Director explained the need to appoint a temporary accountant for 6 months while the permanent accounting officer was on maternity leave.

The Bureau agreed to recommend that the Board accept the appointment.

Work Programme 1998 (A/97/14)

12. The Director introduced the draft Work Programme, which had been revised to take account of the Bureau's detailed comments at the last meeting.

13. Further points were raised and it was agreed that these would be discussed by the three Interest groups during the Board meeting. The Director said that he would visit the Interest groups to note their detailed comments. The Commission also raised a number of points and the Director agreed to discuss these bilaterally with the Commission representatives. He proposed that the Bureau members should meet him after the first day of the Board meeting to prepare a revised version for approval by the Board on the final day.

14. There was also some discussion over whether the projects in the Programme should be divided into two parts, one for which the Governments are responsible and the other where the Agency should use external assistance and/or the expertise from the social partners.

It was agreed that the Director and the Bureau would revise the Work Programme 1998 in the light of the Board's detailed discussions. (Action point 4: Director and Bureau members).

Budget 1997 (oral report)

15. The Director gave an oral overview of the budget situation for 1997, explaining that as the 1 MECU in reserve had only been released in September it had been difficult to manage the year's expenditure.

Draft budget for 1998 (A/97/15)

16. The Director introduced the budget and explained that 700,000 ECU would also be held in reserve next year, with the attendant problems. One of the results of the reserve was that the recruitment procedures had been delayed and that he could only recruit 18 out of the proposed 24 new staff. He also explained that the Agency was preparing a programme to co-finance some of the development work for the State of OSH, giving a maximum of 20,000 ECU to each Focal Point. He hoped that for 1999, the Board and the Commission would agree a budget to allow the Agency to undertake and plan its activities more easily. The Bureau discussed the paper.

The Director agreed to consider drafting an overview of the number of Temporary staff, DNE's and local staff for the next Bureau meeting. (Action point 5: Secretariat)

Miscellaneous budget issues (A/97/16a-c)

17. The Director explained the papers, which needed the Board to take a decision to regularise the various points.

The Bureau agreed that the three papers should go to the Board for their agreement.

Item 5: Recruitment for A posts (B/97/25)

18. The Director updated the Bureau on the recruitment for the A posts. He circulated a short list for five of the posts. Interviews would be held shortly and a reserve list would be prepared which would last for 2 - 3 years, and from which the Agency could recruit further staff. The Director asked Bureau members to respect the confidentiality requirements and asked them to give him any comments personally.

The Director agreed to circulate a copy of the short lists for the rest of the posts to Bureau members shortly. (Action point 6: Secretariat)

Item 6: Election of new Chairperson and Bureau

19. The Director explained the process for electing a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairmen and circulated a note about it to members. There was some discussion about whether there was an obligation to re-elect the “may also take part” category.

The Bureau agreed that the Chairman would give an oral explanation to the Board about the process. (Action point 7: Chairman)

Item 7: Chairman’s note on membership of the Bureau (B/97/26)

20. The Commission expressed some disagreement with the paper and said that they wanted to retain the freedom to send who was available to Bureau meetings.

The Chairman proposed that the document should be dropped and the Bureau agreed.

Item 8: Any other business

21. The dates of the next Bureau and Board meetings were discussed.

It was agreed to propose 23 February 1998 for the Bureau meeting and 24-25th February for the Board meeting. (Action point 8: Chairman)

22. It was also considered necessary to draft a Mandate for the Bureau to be consulted on the further specification of the new Topic Centres.

The new Mandate was agreed and would be typed and presented to the Board. (Action point 9: Secretariat)

23. The final version of the report from the Thematic Network Group on National Priorities and Programmes, “ Priorities and Strategies in Occupational Safety and Health Policy in the Member States of the European Union”, was circulated to members. The Director explained that the printed version would be available immediately after the Board meeting and would be sent to all Board members urgently.

