

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD, 6/7 JUNE 2000**

Present:

Mr. Clifton (Chairman), M. Boisnel, Sr. Biosca de Sagastuy, Mr Rother, Mr Wilders, M. Sapir, Mr. Jepsen, M. Richard, Mr Konkolewsky, Sr Pijuán, Mr Riese and Mr Cockburn (Secretariat).

Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Mr. Fernández Sánchez.

Item 1: Adoption of the Draft Agenda (B/00/A2 Revised)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2000 (B/00/M1)

The minutes were **AGREED** without comment.

Item 3: Action points arising from the minutes (B/00/7)

Following up outstanding Action 3: *interest group co-ordinators to ask the alternate members of their group if they wish to continue receiving documents for meetings that they are not attending.* Government Group provisionally reported that the alternates for Spain, Belgium, Netherlands and UK wished to continue to receive papers. **Co-ordinators AGREED to ask their members again, before the next Board meeting, suggesting that e-mailing of documents is sufficient.**

Item 4: Director's report (B/00/8)

The Director introduced the report and gave an update of subsequent progress.

- The EU/US web site is delayed.
- Agency has applied for funding of web sites and meetings with Candidate Countries. An information meeting is being held in June.
- New products are being launched at the European Parliament in June, relating to the European Week, and including the sub web site.
- The health-care sector project is delayed.
- The Agency's assistant IT manager, Mr Raul Fresneña has resigned; the recruitment process has started.
- A shortlist has been drawn up of candidates for the post of legal advisor.

- The Spanish government has offered supplementary funding to cover a decrease in funding from Basque authorities. A new Agency meeting room is being established in the neighbouring building.

In response to various comments, the Director made the following remarks:

- The Sectoral Committee is a requirement under the Commission's IDA Programme. The Agency has applied for funding under this to enable it to develop the extranet system, based on a repository of information.
- There are good relations with DG Research, including their participation in the seminar held ahead of the report on research priorities. This report will be ready in printed version soon (already via Internet) and will be used to renew contact with the DG. Paragraph 4.12 of the Director's report refers to Member States, rather than Focal Points, because the research priorities project is meant to lead to events at national level, reaching a broad audience. The Agency looks forward to receiving and promoting the Commission's recently published report on stress at work.
- Contacts with the EFTA countries have been through the secretariat. The Agency has requested a tripartite structure, particularly regarding the State of OSH, and to the Agency's knowledge, this is in place. Activities include:
 - Nomination of a 'contact point' and participation in an information meeting.
 - Participation in the production of a short State of OSH report, following the evaluation of the main report.
 - Development of web sites using the Agency structure. These are due on-line in the second half this year.
 - European Weeks on MSD prevention, held independently of the Agency.
- Concerns of the Board/Bureau regarding the European Week awards ceremony have been taken into account. A document explaining the concept of good practice has been drafted and distributed to Focal Points and is to be used as the basis for evaluations. Nominees will be picked by a jury and there will be no "losers". All examples will be published in the national language. The closing event includes a colloquium on MSD prevention. The final definition of the scope is set out in the approved project sheet.
- Regarding collection of good practice examples, this has concentrated on MSD. Stress will follow, but is more problematic due to a lack of examples. The Board agreed the extension of the scope of good practice/dangerous substances, to cover preventive measures.
- The Focus Reports have been postponed; the funds being used for the revision of the State of OSH report and for the seminar due to follow.
- The information request on RSI, from the Netherlands Focal Point, was managed according to the guidelines approved by the Board. The Agency participated in the event organised by the NL Focal Point as an observer, and to present the report.
- The comments advising extreme caution with the project on OSH management systems will be taken into account. The project will be limited to an impartial description of examples that have been put into practice.

Item 5: Draft 4-year rolling work programme

The chairman gave an overview of the contributions received – from thirteen Member States and from the Government Group – and invited comments.

It was clarified that the meaning of a 4-year rolling work programme is that the document is reviewed each year and rolled forward another year. A round-table was held, during which the following general points were raised in discussion:

- The contributions received were rich and heterogeneous, demonstrating the diversity of the audience, however, priorities have to be set.
- The work programme needs to be viewed in the context of the broader European setting, taking into account Member States' and the Commission's future programmes.
- Flexibility must be built-in to allow for changes arising from the evaluation of the Agency, results of the user survey, and the work programmes of other relevant organisations.
- The work programme must be capable of discharge taking account of the characteristics of the Focal Point system, taking into account its strengths and weaknesses. The Agency could consider the wider use of new models for information collection. E.g. collection of national information by a contractor, with Focal Point approval at different stages of the project; or use of national experts, nominated by the Focal Points, to support the Agency and its contractor in the collection of specific information, with feedback to the Focal Points.
- Central to the work programme must be its monitoring and benchmarking role. Monitoring of safety and health is a basic function, still to be properly developed. The State of OSH report can be used for benchmarking, but other indicators and tools need to be developed also, especially system-related information. The Agency should provide information with the necessary European perspective to the policy makers.
- The work programme should refer back to the strategy document and the Agency may consider organising the contributions accordingly. There needs to be a clearer distinction in the work programme between the structures used to produce information and the information products themselves.

Regarding the questions on resources, the following points were raised in discussion:

- In addition to collecting information, the Commission needs the Agency to analyse it and to give a 'European perspective'.
- It is not appropriate to yet take a view on whether current Agency priorities should be maintained, pursued more in-depth or reduced to maintenance level. To do this, it would be necessary to be able to assess how much has been achieved and how much there is left to do before the agreed objectives are fulfilled, and the resources that would be required to proceed further.
- Benchmarking is a difficult task for the Agency, but one that is necessary to assist at national and European level. There is a need for development of existing and new common indicators that would lead to improved comparability of data and better methodologies.

Regarding the questions on whether to pursue a subject based approach, or to focus on sectors, the following points were raised in discussion:

- There are interesting proposals in the areas of national systems and examples of good practice in prevention measures. However, care should be taken to avoid

entering into the area of transposition of Community law. Information on national transposition of EU legislation is available from The Commission and on implementation and enforcement from the SLIC web pages. The Agency web site should link to these.

- Support was expressed for proposals on the inclusion of OSH in education and on the area of training, with caution advised when looking at vocational training issues.
- The Director mentioned the limited work capacity of the Agency and its network and acknowledged the key challenges of assisting policy makers and providing an encyclopaedic knowledge base. The end of June is an absolute deadline for receipt of contributions to the work programme.

It was AGREED that the draft work programme and contributions would be re-drafted to follow the format of the strategy document.

Item 6 – Final draft issue of ‘State of OSH in the EU – pilot study report

Ms Rückert made an overhead presentation setting out how the Agency had taken into account the changes to the report requested by the Administrative Board. The Bureau discussed the report and considered the question of whether the requirements of the Administrative Board had been met.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- The draft represents an improvement over the previous version and the changes requested by the Board, as a condition for agreeing publication, had all been made.
- Many of the points made in previous meetings still applied. However, this is an appropriate point at which to draw a line under the work of drafting this pilot study and concentrate on the evaluation project. The lessons learnt in this project are important to guide future State of OSH reports.
- The Agency should take care that the report is presented as a “pilot study” and that it is not seen as a final product.
- Subject to the Agency carrying out the following specific modifications **the Bureau AGREED that the report should be published in text and on CD-ROM.**
 1. The new designation of ‘pilot study’ should be reflected and explained in the body of the report.
 2. Replace the text “professional expertise/opinion” with “best judgement”.
 3. Attempt to improve the readability of the document.
 4. Re-examine any tick-boxes that might give a wrong impression of the comparability of data.
 5. Assign chapter 10 “Preventive Capacity” to the annex.
- **It was AGREED that the Agency would prepare a summary report that will give perspective to the information contained in the main report and identify additional need for data.** The Agency will discuss the availability of data and indicators.
- **It was AGREED that the summary document may be approved by the Bureau by written procedure, but a meeting will be convened if there are many comments.** The quality of this document is paramount and the necessary time should be taken in its preparation.
- After this, it will be important to concentrate on the next steps and to implement the lessons learned in the evaluation process that has already started, and to do some

further analysis. The Agency will prepare a discussion document together with a working group consisting of representatives from governments and social partners (the Commission explained that this is Agency business and that they would not have the resources to participate in this working group). **It was AGREED that the Agency would organise a ‘follow-up seminar’ that will be scheduled according to the EU agenda.**

- **It was AGREED that the Agency would attempt to link the work programme initiatives to the conclusions of the pilot study report.**

Item 7 – Project activities 2000

The Director clarified that the projects would be gathering examples of good practice and not duplicating collection of statistics.

The Bureau AGREED to consider the projects and take a decision by written procedure.

Item 8 – Miscellaneous budget items

The budget note was AGREED without comment.

Item 9 – Items for information

Regarding the evaluation of the Agency, the Director requested the participation of a Bureau representative and clarification of the Commission representative.

The Chairman agreed to find a Bureau representative.

Any other business.

The Bureau expressed its regret at the death of Mr. Florencio Muñoz and recognised his longstanding support for the Agency.