

July 2004

B/04/M2

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD, 25-26 MAY 2004**

Present:

Ms Schweng (Chairperson), Ms Breindl, Ms Degrand-Guillaud, Mr Remaeus, Mr Lopes, Mr Sapir, Mr Konkolewsky, Ms Ortega, Mr Smith, Mr Paoli, Ms Murillo and Mr Bejer (Secretariat).

The meeting noted apologies received from Mr Fernandez, Mr Jansen and Ms Waltke.

Item 1: Adoption of the Draft Agenda (B/04/A2)

It was agreed that Ms Degrand-Guillaud would give a short presentation of the “Antena’s” work under item 8, Any Other Business.

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2004 (B/03/M4)

The minutes were adopted.

Item 3: Director’s Progress Report (B/04/02)

The Director commented on the activities since the March meeting highlighting the following developments:

- The Agency had had its first meeting with the Focal Point group after enlargement. The group now has 33 members (25 Member States, 4 EFTA countries and 3 Candidate Countries). The meeting had been positive and the integration of all Focal Points into one group had been successful.
- The Agency website was ready in 20 languages before enlargement.
- The European Week 2004 was launched 30 April in Dublin (see under item 7).
- The Agency is currently implementing the new Community staff regulations.

On the request from **Mr Lopes**, the **Director** informed that Agency is involved in the follow-up activities to the US-Europe conference at Lemnos. Furthermore, an editing error in the Progress Report on page 2 would be corrected, i.e. the second heading should read “The Americas” and not “USA”.

Following a request from **Mr Sapir**, the **Director** informed about the Agency procedures for consultation on products. The Agency procedure is to send all products to expert groups/Focal Points, including social partners if they have been nominated, for comments before publishing.

On the request from **Ms Breindl**, it was agreed that Progress Reports noted by the Bureau should be made available to Board members to make it possible for the Board members to follow Agency events in the time between two Board meetings.

The Bureau noted the report.

Item 4 – 3rd Generation Website presentation

Mr Verplanke presented the 3rd Generation Website.¹ At the request of **Ms Breindl**, **Mr Verplanke** informed that the Internet Group had been involved in the process of developing the 3rd Generation Website.

Item 5 – Rolling Work Programme 2005-2008 (B/04/03)

The Director introduced the item stressing that the message from the Focal Point meeting was that enlargement did not mean a change in the strategic priorities in the EU. In addition to the Focal Point meeting the Agency had participated in a brainstorming seminar with the Commission on 3 May. Two of the issues discussed at the brainstorming seminar were how the Agency could support the implementation of Community OSH legislation and how the Agency could support the OSH dimension in European employment policies.

The discussions were hereafter divided into a general discussion on priorities and a discussion on activities.

Priorities:

There was agreement on the principles suggested in the discussion paper, i.e.

- Change the balance between quality and quantity in favour of quality.
- Change the balance between communication and collection of information in favour of communication.
- Distinguish clearly between two key target groups: The company level and the policy-maker level. However, the company level is the most important target group for Agency activities.

Mr Sapir informed that the workers will have a meeting on 23 September. After that meeting the workers' group will have made their priorities clear and be able to recommend activities. However, the following comments could be given at this stage:

- A key issue for the Agency in the future will be to make clear what has already been produced and make this visible.
- The Agency should support the debate at the European level related to the next Community OSH Strategy.
- The Agency should consider how data already collected could be reused. Another related issue is for the Agency to explore how existent Agency

¹ Presentation available here:

<http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=287618&objAction=browse&sort=name>

information can be complemented with information from the new Member States.

- The Agency should improve its web-based information on support for implementation of legislation. A classification of information according to key areas in the directives would be useful.

Ms Schweng, speaking on behalf of the employers, stressed that the end-users should be kept in mind when designing and implementing information activities. Regarding the planning of future Agency products this must be considered together with the target groups for the different activities. The distinction between two different target groups should lead to different formats for the two groups, but not to differences in the content.

Mr Lopes added to the discussions on target groups, that language is an important issue for the company level information. Information targeted at the company level must be translated into the language of the end-users. There may also be a need for paper-based information.

Mr Lopes commented on the Focal Point web-sites and stressed that it is important that they serve their original double purpose: To be a national portal to European information, and to be a European portal to national information. It is therefore important that (part of the) information on the Focal Point websites is available in the local languages as well as in English.

The Director welcomed the comments made and informed the Bureau about some preliminary internal Agency discussions about dividing the Agency website information into two levels: One for the “public” where information would be available in all official languages and another for the “OSH expert community” where information would be available limited languages. At the same time the Agency would review the presentation of both existing and new information taking full advantage of the 3 G website.

Activities:

The discussion on the activities to be included in the next Rolling work programme took form of a review of the current Rolling Work Programme and a discussion on possible additional activities. The discussion related to the different strategic areas outlined in the discussion document sent to the Bureau before the meeting.

Activities in the current Rolling Work Programme

Risk Sectors

As a general proposal **Mr Sapir** suggested that sub-contracting should become a standard element in the risk sector activities. Sub-contracting is widely used and it is of particular relevance for SMEs.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud suggested to change the order of the activities in the current Rolling Work Programme so that the transport sector activity would be carried out first as this would fit better with the Commission’s plans.

European Week

The Director suggested that the European Week on Young Workers be redefined as European Week on Youth and Working Environment. This way it would be possible to broaden the scope to include mainstreaming into education.

Mr Sapir agreed to change the title and focus of the Week on Young Workers/Youth and Working Environment but stressed that employment conditions of young workers is an important issue as well. The precarious character of the employment of young workers makes it difficult for them to integrate at the workplace and thereby become part of the workplace safety culture.

Priority Groups

Mr Sapir commented that a key problem was access to the group of (im)migrant workers. This issue should be addressed in any activity on (im)migrant workers. Regarding the activity on ageing workers it is important not to regard the issue as exclusively concerning “elder workers”. An important aspect of the ageing issue is the health of the worker when he/she enters the group of elder workers. Therefore, (non-sustainable) working conditions for younger workers must be addressed as well.

Ms Breindl stressed that it needs to be clarified who the target group for the (im)migrant activity is. As the project sheet is drafted now, it seems to include intra EU migrants and extra EU immigrants.

Ms Schweng said, that for the employers the ageing workers project had a higher priority than the (im)migrant workers project. Ageing is already an issue in the Commission and an Agency activity should focus on how to match the capacities of older workers and the demands. Ms Schweng suggested to change the order of the (im)migrant workers and ageing workers projects so that the ageing workers project would be carried out first.

Ms Breindl informed that the ageing workers project has a high priority for the government group while opinions are divided on the (im)migrants workers project.

Mr Remaeus and **Ms Schweng** suggested that the (im)migrant workers activity be limited to immigrants from third countries.

Mr Sapir commented that at the company level it does not matter much from where the immigrants come. There is an issue of language and culture and it should be considered to change the activity on (im)migrants to an activity on the multicultural workplace addressing cultural and linguistic issues.

General

Ms Breindl supported that the next Rolling Work Programme be drafted on the basis of the activities already agreed in the current Rolling Work Programme.

The Chair concluded the discussion on the activities in the current Rolling Work Programme to be included in the preliminary draft Rolling Work Programme 2005-2008 saying that Youth and Working Environment should be the theme of the Week in 2006.

that Ageing Workers should be the first group activity, that the Agency should look into the possibilities of an activity on the multicultural workplace instead of the (im)migrant workers activity and that the transport activity should be planned before the metal industry activity. Furthermore, the project sheets should be precise on target groups and products.

New activities

European Week

The Director informed that the idea behind the revisiting model was to repeat one or more of the European Week themes from previous years as the new Member States have not participated in all European Weeks so far and as the problems continue to exist. The synergy model would imply that European Week themes would be taken from the activities agreed for the Risk Sector or Priority Group categories.

The Chair suggested that the discussion on the different models (revisiting and/or synergy model) be postponed to have the active participation from the new Member States.

Mr Sapir agreed that it was important to take into account the situation in the new Member States and that finding themes raising interest in 25 Member States would be difficult.

Mr Remaeus commented that it might be difficult to raise interest in the old Member States for the same theme a second time. Furthermore, the synergy model should also imply coordination between the Agency, SLIC and the Commission.

Mr Lopes supported the idea of revisiting European Week themes. For the EU15 it might make good sense to revisit the themes and make a status on progress made. Regarding the coordination with other institutions Mr Lopes stressed that it was important that the Agency was not prevented from taking up issues because other institutions did not take them up.

Mr Remaeus suggested that a decision on themes for 2007, 2008 and 2009 be postponed to include the new Member States in the decision.

Ms Schweng suggested to consider the inclusion of ageing as a theme for the European Week. Revisiting the Accident theme could also be discussed with the new Member States.

Priority Groups

Ms Schweng commented that the group of self-employed is so heterogenous that it may be difficult to make products which are sufficiently targeted.

Mr Sapir remarked that both temporary workers and self-employed are emerging issues in the new Member States and therefore important.

Mr Remaeus gave higher importance to the activities in the current Rolling Work Programme than to either self-employed or temporary workers. Mr. Remaeus also mentioned problems with the legal basis when addressing self-employed.

Anticipating risks

At the request of **Ms Schweng**, the **Director** confirmed that the Agency would consider the specification of the issue of OSH and Labour Force Supply.

Prevention strategies and policies

Ms Schweng commented that the activity on OSH agreements should be limited to certain sectors.

Mr Sapir suggested that the Agency also looks at national OSH strategies and that the Agency develop activities on some agreed key areas of Community legislation (e.g. risk assessment).

The Chair concluded that the Agency should provide a background document on sectors, groups and weeks for the September meeting and on that basis it should be possible to agree activities in these three areas.

The Director confirmed that the Agency would prepare a background document with context data on sectors, groups and weeks. The document would include a draft list of potential activities.

Item 6 – Staff Reform – transitional measures (B/04/04)

The item was introduced by **Ms Ortega**. The Bureau was only asked to give its opinion on the procedure suggested which would include the submission of transitional measures to the Board for decision.

Mr Sapir asked the Agency to provide some explanatory text when the decision was submitted to the Board for approval.

The Director agreed that some explanatory text should be included. The Agency would report on progress on the issue at the Board meeting in November. The objective was to submit the Agency implementing rules for the staff reform to the Board at its first meeting in 2005.

The Bureau agreed the procedure suggested by the Agency with the provision that the Agency add some explanatory text to the note to the Board.

Item 7 – European Week 2004 (B/04/05)

Ms Murillo gave an update on the European Week 2004.²

At the request from **Mr Remaeus**, **Ms Murillo** informed about the Charter available at the European Week 2004 website. The Charter is a declaration of intend. The Agency cannot monitor whether the intentions are implemented, but everybody who signs the Charter will at a later stage be asked to inform the Agency which activities they actually have carried out.

² Presentation available here:

<http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=287618&objAction=browse&sort=name>

Item 8 – Any Other Business

Ms Degrand-Guillaud informed about the role and work of the “Antenna” in Brussels. A work programme has been agreed for the Antenna and priority will be given to mainstreaming OSH into other policy areas, legal activities (transposition of directives, enlargement preparation and support for the drafting of legislative proposals), and institutional relations (e.g. cooperation with the Agency, support to Committee work, etc).