

October 2004

B/04/M3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD, 30 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Present:

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

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

Item 1: Adoption of the Draft Agenda (B/04/A3)

Mr Sapir wished to inform about the situation regarding new Board members under item 8, Any Other Business.

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 25-26 May 2004 (B/03/M2)

The minutes were adopted.

Item 3: Director's Progress Report (B/04/06)

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

- The work programme 2004 is being implemented according to the plan.
- The efforts to promote Agency products have been strengthened.
- The European Parliament is currently discussing the Community budget, including the possibilities for resources to the Agency for the Enlargement Action Plan.

Mr Sapir commented on the Agency's participation in the Dutch presidency conference, 'Soft Law and Voluntary Initiatives'. Via the Agency's participation the Agency had become part of a political agenda promoted by the Dutch presidency.

The Director replied that the Agency could only take responsibility for the workshop it organized, for the statement it made during the plenary of the conference and the information given to the journalist writing the interview in the conference's pre-magazine. As regards all these 3 issues a balanced approach, stressing that regulation cannot be replaced but only supported and supplemented by voluntary initiatives, had been followed. Statements given and conclusions drawn up by the Dutch Presidency during the conference are of course under the full responsibility of the Presidency.

The Chair asked the Director to confirm that the Enlargement Action Plan is conditioned by additional funding. The Director confirmed this.

Ms Breindl asked the Agency to communicate as soon as possible any changes in the organisation of the closing event for the European Week 2005 and subsequent weeks in order to make it possible for the presidencies to prepare themselves.

The Director replied that it will be up to the Board to decide on the Closing Event. A draft decision will be prepared for the November Board meeting. The Agency's initial idea is to arrange the Closing Event in February/March the year after the European Week together with the annual Board meeting.

Following a question from the Chair, the Director suggested that the pre-board seminar – which would be difficult to arrange due to time problems – could be replaced with some thematic event for the Bureau.

On the proposal from Mr Sapir it was agreed to prepare a document for the November Board meeting outlining the consequences for the operation of the Agency's Board and Bureau of the proposed amendment to the Agency Regulation.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud advised the Agency to use the proposed amendment to the Agency Regulation for its 2005 planning.

The Bureau noted the report.

Item 4 – Conclusions on Planning Seminar – Annual and Rolling Work Programmes (B/04/07)

Rolling Work Programme 2005-2008

Following the Planning Seminar discussions, it was agreed that:

- Promoting OSH among Young People would be the EW theme for 2006
- Risk Assessment would be the EW theme for 2007
- Musculo-skeletal disorders would be the EW theme for 2008
- The Ageing Workforce would be the priority group activity in 2005-2006
- The Multicultural Workforce would be the priority group activity in 2007-2008
- Catering, hotels and restaurants would be the risk sector activity in 2006-2007
- Road transport would be the risk sector activity in 2008-2009

More specific comments regarding the different activities:

The Chair suggested to establish a link between the musculo-skeletal disorders activity and the ageing workforce activity as well as between the Risk Assessment activity and the risk sector activities.

Multicultural Workforce

Mr Lopes stressed the importance of deciding the right approach to this activity. Furthermore, the multicultural workforce should not be considered as the same as immigrants.

The Director replied that the Agency will develop the project carefully with the involvement of the social partners.

The Chair suggested that awareness raising should be important issues for the activity.

Work Programme 2005

It was agreed that the Agency should include the comments given on the different new project sheets during the Planning Seminar and send the project sheets to the Bureau for comments. An updated project sheet on the Risk Observatory will be prepared later as the Agency will need to have its Advisory Committee meeting first.

Ms Breindl stressed that the Enlargement Action Plan project sheet must be changed to achieve a more balanced approach respecting the autonomy of the national and the Agency level.

Regarding the research activity the Commission has asked the Agency to carry out, Mr Paoli informed that the activity in 2005 will not involve any particular role for the focal points as the 2005 activity will be focused on the establishment of a network.

On that basis, the Bureau concluded there would be no need for a project sheet in the 2005 work programme for the research activity.

Other issues

Mr Sapir commented on the research area and remarked that it was important to get OSH into the 7th Research Framework Programme. Furthermore, good practice and research must be linked. Regarding the ERANET activity, Mr Sapir suggested that it should involve the social partners.

About the ERANET the Director informed that the Agency is only responsible for the communication in the network made up of research institutions. The Board will be informed when a proposal is ready from the ERANET.

It was agreed to prepare a draft resolution for the November Board meeting on the 7th Research Framework Programme.

Regarding the activity on Access to Agency on-line Information, Mr Sapir requested that the project sheet be more clear on how the expert space and the public space would look like.

Mr Sapir asked how the social partners could become more involved in the relations between the Agency and the Topic Centres.

The Director replied that it was important to separate two levels of the Agency. At one level there are the strategic decisions which are to be taken by the Board. Another level is the implementation of the strategic decisions taken. In order to implement the Board's decisions the Agency cooperates with the Topic Centres. The progress on the implementation is reported back to the strategic level via the Director's Progress Reports. In their capacity as members of the focal point group the social partners are involved in the implementation process and have access to the same documents as the focal points. The focal points should have access to the technical specifications for the Topic Centres.

The Chair supported the division of tasks between the strategic and the implementation level. The Agency is responsible for the implementation of the strategic decisions and therefore a clear separation of tasks is necessary.

Item 5 – New rules of procedures (B/04/08)

The Bureau agreed that the Agency would send a draft for new rules of procedure for comments to the Bureau. After that, the draft would be presented to the Board in November for adoption as a draft. When the amendment to the Agency Regulation is adopted, the draft rules of procedure can be send to the Commission for its opinion before the Board adopts the final rules of procedure.

Item 6 – Any Other Business

Mr Sapir informed that the social partners at European level had raised a question of the legality of the appointment of the social partners from the new Member States to the Agency's Board. In the opinion of the social partners, the procedure for the nomination of the members had not been correct.

The Director informed that the Agency can only follow the Council decisions regarding who is to be considered as member of the Board and who is not.