

December 2005

B/05/M4

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE GOVERNING
BOARD, 7 SEPTEMBER 2005**

Present:

Mr Lopes (chair), Mr Remaeus, Ms Degrand-Guillaud, Ms Dapergola, Mr Cerfeda, Ms Schweng, Mr Konkolewsky, Mr Paoli, Mr Smith, Mr Blanch, and Mr Bejer (Secretariat).

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

Item 1: Adoption of the revised Draft Agenda (B/05/A4 rev)

A revised draft agenda was tabled in order to include the information item, December Board decision to implement amendments to Agency Regulation.

The revised agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 18 May 2005 (B/05/M3)

The minutes were adopted.

Item 3: Director's Progress Report (B/05/08)

The Director introduced the report and added the following comments:

- The amendment to the Agency Regulation was adopted in June by the Council
- The draft European Week 2004 evaluation report by CSES was in general positive with the exception of the focal point subsidy, where added value and efficiency were rated low/medium. The evaluation results had been presented to the focal points and it had been agreed to establish a working group with focal point representatives and Agency participants to come up with a proposal for a subsidy scheme, which ensures higher additionality.
- The new Topic Centres Working Environment and Risk Observatory had been designated.
- The Agency had analysed how the carry-overs from 2005 to 2006 could be reduced following comments from the European Parliament during the discharge discussions. One of the measures taken was to reduce the 2005 specific contracts with the Topic Centre by limiting the tasks to those that can be carried out in 2005. The remaining tasks will then be included in the 2006 specific contracts. The resources on the 2005 budget which then become available will be allocated to additional translations of existing Agency publications.

- In 2004 the Agency commissioned an external company – KPMG - to conduct independent audits of a number of randomly selected organisations which took part in the SME funding scheme 2003-2004. KPMG's report presents the results of ex-post review procedures carried out on the premises of 6 of the 40 beneficiaries of this SME funding scheme. The Agency notes the KPMG report providing evidence of the sound financial management by the Agency on the one hand, and of the project holders' reliability and honesty on the other. No recovery order was deemed necessary.
- The Agency had initiated a written procedure among the Board members in order to approve the 2004 accounts.
- The joint web-site with NIOSH had been launched.

At the request from Mr Remaeus, the Director gave the following additional information:

- The Agency has taken on the role as chair in the European Construction Safety Forum after a request from the members of that forum at the end of the forum's first meeting. However, chairing meetings in the forum does not involve any additional Agency resources.
- The Agency wants to improve the knowledge and documentation base of the impact and usability of its products. To achieve that, a number of activities to receive feedback from target groups on Agency products will be initiated.

At the request from Mr Lopes, the Director commented:

- An annex to the minutes from this meeting will be included providing information on the focal point subsidy 2004.
- The selection of the additional publications for translation as mentioned above is not only based on the number of downloads from the web-site, but also on an assessment by the Agency's OSH experts.

At the request from Mr Remaeus, Mr Paoli informed that:

- The high-level seminar to discuss the report on OSH research priorities will involve the social partners and the main research institutions in Europe selected by the Agency.
- The Agency does not write in the European Week 2005 material that 75 db is dangerous. What it does write is that all noise levels may cause problems.

Item 4: First discussion of work programme 2007 (B/05/09)

The discussion was divided in two: On the European Week 2008 on Risk Assessment and on the priority group activity, Multicultural workforce.

Risk Assessment

Mr Smith introduced the discussion paper on the European Week 2008 on Risk Assessment (presentation available here: <http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=500543&objAction=browse&sort=name>).

The Director informed Mr Remaeus that a proposal to suggest to SLIC to run a campaign on Risk Assessment to create synergies with the Agency's campaign had been brought forward at the focal point meeting.

Mr Lopes supported the suggestion and added that an Agency campaign on risk assessment would be strengthened considerably if it were supported by a SLIC campaign stressing the enforcement element. Furthermore, recognizing the importance of SMEs, it should be considered whether tailored messages may also be needed in other areas.

Mr Remaeus commented that SLIC agrees that there are benefits from synergies between Agency and SLIC activities and that he will bring the proposal forward to SLIC. In addition Mr Remaeus made the following comments:

- Disseminating information cannot be an objective for the campaign – it can only be a tool to achieve objectives. However, it should also be made clear that having a proper risk assessment is a legal obligation.
- A good risk assessment takes into account the composition of the workplace's workforce – if not, it is not a good risk assessment.
- As regards language, expressions ('industry', 'company') indicating that proper risk assessment is only a private sector problem should be avoided, as the problem of an insufficient risk assessment is at least as big in the public sector.
- It is necessary to define the concept 'SME' in a meaningful way (e.g. workplaces with 20 or fewer employees). Using the standard definition of an SME would mean that a very high proportion of employers would be included in this 'special' category.
- Stressing the benefits for the workplaces of having a proper risk assessment should be a key message.
- A risk assessment is not just a question of either/or. The process of carrying out the risk assessment requires due consideration of the work context.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud supported the focus on SMEs and added that the design of the risk assessments database must be considered carefully in order not just to make a collection of risk assessment tools, but instead to create a database with the best tools. Furthermore, risk assessments should not just include the 'easy' issues such as the physical working environment, but also issues such as the psycho-social working environment.

The opinion that the database must not just be a collection of risk assessment tools, but include only the best methods was supported from all groups.

Ms Dapergola commented that the campaign should cover a wide scope of issues and that one of the messages should be the importance of training. As regards the concept of risk assessment, it should be made clear that a risk assessment is not a punctual activity but an ongoing, continuous process.

Ms Schweng, without having had the possibility to consult with her group, gave the following comments:

- The campaign should be general in scope
- If there is a need to narrow the focus, newly started companies should be targeted

Mr Remaeus and Ms Schweng stressed that the intention to set up quantitative objectives must not lead to a narrowing of the scope of the campaign.

Multicultural workforce

Mr Paoli introduced the discussion document on migrant workers (the presentation is available here:

<http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelihood/livelihood.exe?func=ll&objId=500543&objAction=browse&sort=name>).

The Director informed, that the focal points had been asked whether they had national experiences in the area of migrant workers and OSH, but the answer was negative.

The Bureau discussed a number of conceptual issues related to the project:

- The question of whether to include intro-EU migrants or to limit the project to extra-EU migrants.
- Whether to include both legal and illegal immigrants in the project.
- The problem of lack of evidence pointing out what the OSH problems are for migrant workers.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud stressed that the Commission would like the Agency to carry out some activity in the area of migrant workers.

Mr Cerfeda commented that temporary work ought to be the theme of a specific activity. This activity could include a database with information on different kinds of temporary work.

At the proposal from the Director, it was agreed to suggest to the Board to start work on migrant workers by asking the Risk Observatory to improve the knowledge base regards migrant workers and OSH and then to agree another priority group activity for the 2007 work programme.

Item 5: Plan for 2006 evaluation of Agency (B/05/10)

The Director introduced the item and summarized the comments given by the focal points at their meeting two days earlier (presentation available here: <http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelihood/livelihood.exe?func=ll&objId=500543&objAction=browse&sort=name>). The focal points had stressed the importance of including the Agency's role as facilitator of the focal point work. Furthermore, the work of the focal points should not be seen exclusively as an Agency-focal point relation, but also as a focal point-focal point relation. Finally, the focal points had expressed their desire to be involved in the planning and implementation of the evaluation.

On the question of the organisation of the evaluation, Mr Lopes stressed the need to clarify how far back in time the evaluation should go.

Mr Remaeus expressed support to the idea of letting the new Bureau take on the task as steering group of the evaluation. But the decision on this issue as well as on the involvement of the focal points should be taken by the Board.

Ms Schweng asked for a clarification on when the Board had 'agreed' that the next evaluation should focus on the Agency network, in particular the focal points. Furthermore, the Agency should consider whether the timeframe for the evaluation was realistic taking into account that there are 25 focal points to be evaluated.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud supported the focal point opinion that there was a need to focus also on the Agency's role in facilitating focal point work. In addition, it was suggested to replace the "... and that the information has led to a change in behaviour as regards occupational safety and health" with "... and has been put into practice" on page 5 of the document B/05/10. Finally, it should be considered not only to evaluate the 'results' (page 3 of document B/05/10) compared to the objectives in the work programmes, but also include other relevant 'results'.

The Director gave the following comments:

- Regarding focal point involvement: Their involvement should be agreed with the external evaluators as part of the evaluation model.
- The Agency will clarify the time frame under evaluation.
- As regards the background to the sentence in document B/05/10 indicating a Board agreement in March 2005 on evaluating the Agency, the Director pointed to the draft work programme 2006 adopted by the Board in March which reads: "An external evaluation of the Agency with special emphasis on its Focal Point network will be carried out" (page 6).
- As regards the timeframe suggested for the evaluation, the evaluator will have to be able to handle the languages of the 25 focal points. This requirement will imply that the evaluator will have to allocate a certain number of staff to the task which means that more focal points can be evaluated at the same time. The Agency will, however, discuss what would be a realistic timeframe with an experienced evaluator.
- The Agency agrees that the Agency's role in facilitating focal point work must also be evaluated. This issue will be taken into account when drafting the Terms of Reference.

It was agreed that the Agency prepares a draft Terms of Reference for the Board meeting in December on the basis of document B/05/10 and the comments given by the Bureau and the focal points.

Item 6: Any other business

The Director informed that an information document had been tabled (B/05/11) in order to remind the Bureau about the decisions the Board needs to take in December in order to implement the amendment to the Agency Regulation.

At the request from Mr Remaeus, Ms Degrand-Guillaud informed that she had no news about the process of the selection of the Agency Director.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud also informed about the nomination process of Board members following the amendment to the Agency Regulation based on preliminary information from the Council. The nomination of Board members in accordance with article 8 (2) will probably not take place until 2007 when the new Advisory Committee has been appointed. However, as provided for in article 8 (3), this means that the current Board members will continue as members until the new Board is appointed.

Ms Schweng reminded the Commission about the importance of considering the timing of the nomination and appointment of the new Board.

The Director presented the new 3rd generation website (presentation available here: <http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=500543&objAction=browse&sort=name>). The new website will go online in the beginning of September.

Ms Degrand-Guillaud asked the Agency to put a link to the 'europa'-site on the front page of the new website.

Ms Schweng asked whether the migration to the 3rd generation website had caused technical problems.

The Director replied that the migration had worked very well and that the project had been implemented within the established deadlines. However, some focal points had mentioned that they had experienced less stability and on their focal point websites after the migration. The Agency would now investigate the reasons for this decrease in stability.

ANNEX - FOCAL POINT SUBSIDY 2004

Country	Available amount	Amount paid*
BELGIUM	40,000	37,753.00
CYPRUS	30,000	22,623.00
CZECH REP.	40,000	34,343.50
DENMARK	30,000	5,690.00
ESTONIA	30,000	21,492.00
FINLAND	30,000	30,000.00
FRANCE	50,000	49,775.00
GERMANY	50,000	43,778.00
GREECE	40,000	12,002.00
HUNGARY	40,000	2,122.00
ITALY	50,000	49,771.00
LATVIA	30,000	7,823.00
LITHUANIA	40,000	39,018.00
LUXEMBOURG	20,000	20,000.00
MALTA	30,000	22,092.00
NETHERLANDS	40,000	40,000.00
POLAND	50,000	46,784.00
PORTUGAL	40,000	25,207.00
SLOVENIA	30,000	9,203.50
SPAIN	50,000	33,541.00
SWEDEN	30,000	11,873.00
UK	50,000	0
AUSTRIA	30,000	0
IRELAND	30,000	0
SLOVAKIA	40,000	0
	940,000	564,891.00

* The amount paid may be lower than the available amount for a number of reasons:

- The focal points did not request the total amount available
- Some proposed activities (when preparing the application) were not eligible, according to the focal point subsidy guidelines or some final costs were rejected, not being eligible.

- The focal points had made an overestimation (when preparing the preliminary budget) of the final real costs
- Some original activities were finally cancelled and did not take place, so the expected costs did not exist.