

January 2007

B/07/M1

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE GOVERNING
BOARD, 11 JANUARY 2007**

Present:

Mr Remaeus (chair), Mr Riese, Mr Cerfeda, Mr Gyorgy, Ms Schweng, Ms Waltke, Ms Asherson, Ms Degrand, Mr Takala, Mr Taylor, Mr Rial-Gonzalez, Mr Smith, Mr Blanch and Mr Bejer (Secretariat).

Mr Lusi had informed he was not able to attend

Item 1: Adoption of the revised draft Agenda (B/07/A1)

Some additional documents were tabled. These were:

- A note on the organisation of the Board and Bureau work (B/07/07)
- A power point presentation from CSES on the Agency evaluation.

The revised agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 26 September 2006 (B/06/M3)

The minutes were adopted.

Item 3: Director's Progress Report (B/07/01)

In addition to the written report communicated before the meeting, the Director commented on the following issues:

- The evaluation of the European Week 2005 is being finalized and will be communicated to the stakeholders soon
- The Agency aims at strengthening the dialogue with its stakeholders. Meetings have been held with the European social partners in Brussels. At the same time, the Agency is increasing the number of visits to the focal points to intensify cooperation. Finally, a number of activities have been carried to develop links to the Spanish partners.

Mr Blanch informed about the EP approval of the Agency's budget. The adoption of the final budget only included minor changes. However, a part of the budget was put in reserve, and the reserve will only be released when the Agency complies with four conditions: 1. That the Agency has implemented its 2006 work programme in a satisfactory way; 2. That the Agency has provided the EP with the necessary information to be able to monitor its 2007 activities; 3. That the guidelines on staff policy have been fully implemented, and; 4. That the Agency has prepared a staff policy plan.

Mr Blanch also informed about the situation as regards the rental agreement for the Agency premises. A 4-year contract has been signed with a gradual increase in rent.

Item 4: Conclusions from the seminar on the preliminary draft work programme 2008 (B/07/02)

The Agency has drafted conclusions from the seminar (these were revised after the meeting to take into account the Bureau's comments – the revised conclusions are available here: <http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=684626&objAction=browse&sort=name>)

In addition to the conclusions, the following comments were given:

European Week

As regards the theme for the next European Week, it was agreed that three options should be presented to the Board with the following priorities:

1. Maintenance
2. Physical Agents, focusing on electromagnetic fields
3. Violence and bullying

Mr Cerfeda commented on the bi-annual cycle for the European Week, stressing that it is important that the Agency makes clear the schedule for preparation and launch. The 2nd campaign year should focus on dissemination and there should be something concrete to finalize the campaign at the end of the 2nd year (e.g. an activity report).

Mr Smith said that the Agency was conscious of the need to improve reporting on the impact of the Week and was already taking steps in this direction, but he suggested that it may be difficult to reintroduce national activity reports but this would depend on the future of the subsidy scheme.

Ms Degrand suggested that the 2nd campaign year be used to focus on specific sectors or topics.

Risk Observatory

Mr Cerfeda asked the Agency to also involve the social partners in the dissemination of information – in addition to the focal points.

Mr Rial-Gonzalez responded that the focal points are not the only communication channel the Agency uses, but that the Agency would be happy to cooperate with the social partners on this issue.

Ms Waltke asked the Agency to review the objectives for the Risk Observatory to ensure consistency.

Mr Riese stressed that the target group for the Risk Observatory work is not primarily SMEs, but researchers, policy-makers and social partners.

Administrative support

Mr Riese asked to add on objective to reduce staff turnover to the objectives for the personnel area.

The Director responded that steps have already been taken to reduce turnover by changing the contract policy from maximum 8 years employment to a possibility for indefinite contracts.

Item 5: Interim Report on Agency Evaluation

Mr Malan from CSES presented the interim results of the Agency evaluation (presentation available <http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=698350&objAction=browse&sort=name>). Mr Malan suggested that based on the interim results, a survey should be initiated among the Board members.

Ms Schweng commented that the Board members should not be asked to answer questions they already answered at a previous stage of the evaluation.

The Bureau noted the interim report and supported the idea of carrying out a survey among the Board members on the strategic issues of the evaluation.

Item 6: Increasing the flexibility in the Agency's financial support to the Member States (B/07/04)

Mr Smith introduced the item explaining that the purpose was to offer the focal points an alternative option to the focal point grants. The alternative would be a 'European Week Assistance Package'. The amounts available to each country would reflect what is available for the current focal point grants. Following discussion with focal points earlier in the week, it was now proposed to open the scheme to all focal points and not just the EU 12 as indicated in the paper.

Mr Gyorgy commented that the pilot scheme must be followed up by an assessment of how it worked.

The Bureau agreed to submit the decision to the Board with a positive recommendation.

Item 7: Improving the procedure for decision-making via written procedure (B/07/05)

The Bureau agreed the proposals in note B/07/05.

Item 8: Decision on 2007 Bureau meetings

The Bureau agreed the following meeting dates:

19 March (pm – starting at 14h)

14pm and 15am May

12pm and 13am September

3pm and 4am+pm December (3pm and 4am seminar on work programmes, 4pm Bureau meeting)

Item 9: Organisation of Board and Bureau work (B/07/07)

Mr Takala introduced the proposals in the note to strengthen cooperation and involvement of the Board and Bureau.

The proposals and approach taken by the Agency was generally welcomed.

The Bureau did, however, not see the need for an ad hoc working group to develop the next Rolling Work Programme. Furthermore, group meetings should be organised as follows:

- During Board meetings following the existing model
- During the pre-Board seminar and the Luxembourg interest group meetings groups will meet as during the Board meetings, but with a first part where Agency staff will be present
- During the planning seminar with focal points, the groups will be mixed and Agency staff will be present.

The interest groups did not see the need for separate workspaces on the Extranet.

With these modifications the proposals were agreed.

Item 10: Any Other Business

Ms Degrand informed about the process of preparing the next Community Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health, about organisational issues in the Commission and about funding opportunities for safety and health activities, in particular the Framework Programme for Research, the new ESF Regulation and the PROGRESS instrument.

Mr Bejer informed that the Agency intends to organise the 'strategic discussion' on the Risk Observatory as foreseen in the work programme 2007 in the context of an enlarged Advisory Group meeting during 2007.

Mr Cerfeda requested that the Bureau in May discusses the consequences for the Agency of the new Community Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health.