

September 2007

B/07/M3

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE GOVERNING
BOARD, 14 MAY 2007**

Present:

Ms Schweng (Chair), Mr Remaeus, Mr Riese, Mr Lusi, Mr György, Mr Lopes, Mr Cerfeda, Ms Asherson, Mr Fuente, Mr Takala, Mr Rial-Gonzalez, Mr Smith, Mr Taylor, Mr Blanch, Ms O'Brien and Mr Bejer (Secretariat).

Item 1: Adoption of the draft Agenda (B/07/A3)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2007 (B/07/M2)

Mr Lusi asked for the following addition under item 3:

“Regarding item 3:

Mr Lusi suggested that the title of article 14 be changed to “Chairing of meetings” and that it be specified in the 2nd sentence of art 10 (3), that it is the Bureau members who can raise an objection.”

Ms Schweng requested a change under item 3 as well to better reflect what she said about the enterprise survey, which was not currently reflected in an adequate way. The text, “Ms Schweng confirmed that the process the step-wise approach” should be replaced with “Ms Schweng commented that the step-wise approach for the enterprise survey should be continued”

With these changes the minutes were adopted.

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

The Director referred to the report distributed before the meeting, and added the following:

- The Commission had reviewed its financial regulations and the Agency was looking at the issue with a view to have new financial regulations in place
- A meeting of the Advisory Group Working Environment Information was held end March. The meeting reviewed products and the overall assessment was favourable.
- The date for the launch of the European Campaign had been fixed to 4 June. The Commissioner would participate in the launch.
- The latest statistics for the Agency web-site showed a significant increase in the number of visitors.

Mr Blanch informed on steps taken to increase the transparency in the Agency's recruitment procedures. In this regard, information on selection processes available on the website will indicate the stage of each process, in particular whether the overall pool of candidates are under consideration by the Selection Committee or short-listed candidates have been contacted for interview. Once the reserve list is prepared by the Selection Committee, the process will appear as closed.

Mr Fuente commented on the information request from the Commission to the Agency about occupational exposure levels. He indicated that he would like the Agency to focus on carcinogens and mutagens (but also reprotoxic substances), and particularly on three issues: exposure limits (inside and outside the EU); how they are set (e.g., if/how both scientific and socio-economic criteria are used); and -where available- estimates on potentially exposed populations.

Following a request from Mr Lopes about the focal point subsidy, Mr Smith informed that all reports on the 2006 subsidy have been received (at least electronically). As regards the 2007 subsidy, six countries have chosen the new assistance package scheme (Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany Lithuania and the Netherlands).

Upon a request from Mr Lopes, Ms O'Brien provided information on the EU-US summit. The summit will take place in Cascais whereas a conference will take place 6 November in Lisbon to present the new Community Strategy on OSH.

Item 4: First discussion on Strategy/Rolling Work Programme 2009-2012 (B/07/08)

The Director introduced the item (presentation available here:

<http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=759517&objAction=browse&sort=name>)

Before entering into the detailed discussions, Mr Riese welcomed the idea of integrating the strategy and the rolling work programme in one document.

The discussion was hereafter divided into the following parts: Mission, vision, strategic goals, strategic areas and values.

Mission

Mr Cerfedda commented that by including the words, "technical, scientific and economic", the Agency may be too limited in the kind of information it can collect, analyse and disseminate. Also social and legal information should be considered.

Mr Riese supported the viewpoint expressed by Mr Cerfedda and suggested to replace "technical, scientific and economic" with "relevant".

A discussion took place on what would be the best wording of the last part of the mission statement "that can serve the needs of people involved in safety and health at work". Some felt that the words "involved in" could lead to a too narrow definition of the end-users. However, after having discussed different alternatives, it was agreed not to change the current formulation.

The Bureau agreed the following mission statement: "The Agency is the European Union organisation responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant information that can serve the needs of people involved in safety and health at work"

Vision:

Mr Cerfeda suggested to work on the basis of the 2nd proposal submitted by the Agency, “It is the vision of the Agency to” as this formulation better matched the requirements to a vision formulation.

Ms Schweng and Mr Riese suggested to delete the last part, “for current and future European citizens” as some may interpret this as excluding e.g. immigrant workers from outside the EU.

Mr Gyorgy asked for a vision going beyond Europe and taking into account workplaces outside the EU. The concept “European prevention culture” is unclear and it may be an idea to organise an activity in the future to discuss this concept.

Mr Remaeus agreed that the concept, “European prevention culture” is unclear and the word European should be deleted in this context as it is difficult to identify what a European prevention culture is.

The Bureau agreed on the following formulation of the vision: “It is the vision of the Agency to be the European centre of excellence for occupational safety and health information, promoting a preventive culture to support the goal of making Europe’s current and future workplaces safe, healthy and productive”.

Strategic goals:

Ms Schweng and Mr Riese expressed their support for the proposal submitted by the Agency.

Mr Cerfeda requested a more active formulation of the last strategic goal “to be a socially and environmentally responsible organisation”. The formulation should be more ambitious.

Mr Fuente requested that the new Agency Strategy makes a reference to the new Community Strategy on OSH.

Mr Lusis asked the Agency to check if the discussions that took place at the September 2006 Bureau meeting have been taken sufficiently into account.

A discussion took place on whether to include the word “workplaces” in the 2nd goal, “to identify Good Practices and facilitate their exchange”. However, it was concluded that Good Practices are not necessarily limited to workplaces, but can also apply to e.g. systems and programmes.

The Bureau agreed the following formulation of the strategic goals:

- to raise awareness of occupational safety and health risks and their prevention
- to identify Good Practices on occupational safety and health and facilitate their exchange
- to anticipate new and emerging risks in order to facilitate preventive action
- to promote Member State cooperation on information sharing and research
- to promote networking to make the best use of occupational safety and health resources in Europe and beyond
- to be a leading organisation in social and environmental responsibility

Strategic areas:

Mr Remaeus questioned whether Administrative Support is a strategic area.

Ms Schweng suggested that the “Communication and Promotion” area should be renamed to “Communication, Promotion and Campaigning” to better reflect the importance of the campaigning activities.

The Bureau agreed the following strategic and support areas:

- European Risk Observatory – anticipating change
- Working Environment Information
- Communication, Promotion and Campaigning
- Management, networking, strategy and coordination
- Administrative support for the Agency

Values:

Mr Riese suggested to include a value on transparency which among other things would mean that the Agency informs about from where it has got its data and how the data has been analyzed.

Mr Gyorgy asked for the inclusion of the word “user-friendly”.

The Bureau agreed the following formulation of the values to guide the implementation of the new strategy:

- Pan-European: The Agency brings together actors from across Europe to create a pan-European approach to occupational safety and health, we believe that this is essential if our activities are to provide European added value
- Relevant and responsive: The Agency sees occupational safety and health as an integral part of Europe’s social policy and as a pre-requisite for employment and competitiveness. By responding to user needs with practical and user-friendly information, we ensure our work is relevant to Europe’s social and economic agenda, to our stakeholders and end-users
- Reliable and transparent: The information provided by the Agency should be accurate and un-biased
- Tripartite: The Agency works on the basis of, and promotes, tripartism
- Partnership and network-based: The Agency cooperates with relevant partners and participates in – or creates – networks to carry out initiatives at a pan-European level

Item 5: Bureau recommendation on Annual Activity Report (B/07/09)

The Bureau agreed to give a positive recommendation to the Board on the adoption of the Board’s assessment and analysis of the Activity Report

Item 6: Bureau recommendation on Annual Report (B/07/10)

The Bureau agreed to give a positive recommendation to the Board on the adoption of the Annual Report

Item 7: Action plan and status on follow-up of audit reports (B/07/11)

The Bureau noted the action plan and status

Item 8: Decision on status of CARDS participants in operational networks (B/07/12)

Mr Gyorgy stressed the importance of involving the social partners from the beginning of the programme as the Agency activities will set the standard for other activities.

Mr Fuente stressed that it is important that the resources the Agency spends on CARDS activities are financed from the CARDS programme and not from the ordinary Agency budget.

With these comments the Bureau agreed the proposal to let the CARDS countries participate in the Agency's operational activities and networks.

Item 9: Action plan and follow-up on evaluation (B/07/13)

The Director introduced the item (presentation available here:

<http://extranet.osha.eu.int/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=759517&objAction=browse&sort=name>)

Mr Riese made the following comments:

- Focal point meetings should not change location for each meeting
- The Agency must consider how the focal point meetings can become more effective given the high number of participants.

With these comments the Bureau noted the proposed action plan.

Item 10: Any Other Business

The Director informed the Bureau about a change in the rules for reimbursement of meeting participants. A set of rules for the reimbursement of travel and other expenditures of experts attending Agency meetings is being prepared. The new rules will make it clear to meeting participants what they can expect. An important element of the rules will be the reimbursement of travel expenditures. At the moment, participants in Agency meetings are obliged to fly economy class. However, Board and Bureau members can get tickets on business class reimbursed. It will be necessary to change this practice so that all participants in Agency meetings will have to buy the 'most economical' flight ticket. This is already the practice in CEDEFOP and the Advisory Committee according to the information the Agency has received. The Agency will inform the Board about this change and the new rules will follow the rules adopted by the Commission to the extent possible.

Mr Fuente informed about two issues:

- The Commission had added a comment to the staff policy plan prepared by the Agency before forwarding it, making a clear reference to the new Community Strategy on OSH and the tasks for the Agency in this strategy.
- The Commission wants a good cooperation with the Agency and arrangements have already been put in place or are being developed to fulfil this objective.