

September 2008
B/08/M3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE GOVERNING BOARD, 16 SEPTEMBER 2008

Present:

Mr György (Chair), Mr Lusi, Mr Remaesus, Ms Breindl, Ms Smith, Ms Asherson, Mr Levy, Mr Cerfeda, Mr Constantinou, Mr Alvarez, Ms Böhm, Mr Takala, Mr Smith, Mr Rial Gonzalez, Mr Taylor, Ms Murillo, Ms O'Brien and Mr Bejer (Secretariat), as well as Mr Munar and Mr Muller (part of the meeting).

The Chair informed that Ms Schweng and Mr Riese were unable to attend and that Ms Breindl attended in Mr Riese's place.

The Chair welcomed Mr Constantinou as new Commission representative and asked the Commission representatives present to forward to Mr Biosca, the Bureau's desire to thank him for his active collaboration and participation in the Agency's and the Bureau's work over a number of years.

Finally, the Chair welcomed Ms Murillo as the new head of the Agency's Resource and Service Center.

Mr Takala reminded the Bureau members about the new rules for reimbursement, which among other things implied that meals offered by the Agency would have to be compensated in the daily allowances paid.

Item 1: Adoption of the draft Agenda (B/08/A3)

Mr Cerfeda commented that the document on Impact Assessment had arrived too late to be able to prepare a final discussion on the document today.

Mr Bejer suggested that a first discussion took place at this meeting and that the document would then be discussed again at the meeting in Luxembourg and at the next Bureau meeting.

Mr Remaesus asked for a discussion of the dates for the next Bureau meeting under any other business.

With this understanding the agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the meeting of 13 May 2008 (B/08/M2)

The minutes were adopted.

Item 3: Director's Progress Report (B/08/06)

The Director introduced the report adding the following comments:

- the Agency still experienced problems with the written procedure for adopting Board decisions. As agreed, the Board is now informed about the Bureau's position. However, it is still a problem that not sufficient Board members vote (see here for the background presented:

<http://extranet.osha.europa.eu/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=994855&objAction=browse&sort=name>).

Mr Takala asked for the Bureau's suggestions as to how to solve the problem.

- there had been an exchange of letters with BUSINESSEUROPE about the statistics the Agency uses regarding accidents and diseases. The Director stressed that the role of the Agency is to provide the best possible evidence on the situation as regards OSH in Europe. This, of course, involves a critical assessment of the methodologies used. If the Agency would only present the data available from Eurostat, an incomplete picture would be made.

As regards the written procedures, Ms Smith suggested that the Agency could provide better explanations to the Board members on the decisions submitted.

Mr Remaeus suggested to make it clearer to the Board members that they can vote electronically.

Regarding the accident and disease figures, Mr Remaeus stressed that it is the Agency's role to raise awareness about the size of the problem.

Ms Asherson commented that it is important that the Agency continues to inform about its sources. The data the Agency used on diseases from the ILO did cause some reactions as they are different from national statistics in some countries.

Following a request from Mr Cerfeda, Mr Rial Gonzalez informed about the workshop in relation to the forecasting methodology task that the Advisory Group already discussed the list of experts to be invited to the workshop and that – among others – the social partners will be asked to give an opinion on the methodologies, and to follow the project via the ERO Advisory Group.

Mr Rial Gonzalez replied in response to a question from Ms Bohm that the New OSH ERA thematic priorities is in line with the EU-OSHA Strategy, among other reasons because the ERO has been able to have an impact on the Community strategy.

Mr Cerfeda requested information on the social partner involvement in the Risk Assessment Magazine publication. Mr Munar replied that the social partners had been invited to contribute and that Mr Vogel had provided an article from the workers.

Ms Bohm questioned the impartiality of CSES in assessing the success of the ECAP model to which Mr Smith replied that CSES in previous evaluations had pointed to the need for replacing the focal point grant system with something different. However, the ECAP model was not a CSES proposal and CSES should therefore not have a problem with impartiality.

Mr Smith informed – in reply to a request from Mr Cerfeda - that the FITS conference in November 2008 is a French conference where the French Presidency is in charge of the programme and the invitations. The Agency has promoted Risk Assessment as a theme and will make a presentation at the conference.

Mr Cerfeda requested information on the involvement of the European Works Councils in the Agency collaboration with ORC. Ms O'Brien informed that the main role of EU-OSHA in relation to ORC is information provision whereas ORC is a useful vehicle for engaging some of their members. As regard the Works Council, the Agency can only participate following an invitation. However, the Agency would be happy to accept an invitation.

Ms Smith asked about the status of the cleaning workers project and the follow-up to comments from the employers to which Mr Taylor replied that it is now entering the publication phase.

Ms Bohm asked to the status of EU-OSHA's own risk assessment to which Mr Takala confirmed that the Agency has a risk assessment and that a number of priorities had been identified and actions taken.

Mr Muller made a presentation on the good practice event the Agency organises together with the Czech Presidency and Mr Munar presented some of the Risk Assessment campaign products, including the development of the interactive risk assessment tool (IRAT) (presentations available here:

<http://extranet.osha.europa.eu/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=994855&objAction=browse&sort=name>).

Ms Asherson commented that the IRAT is a good idea for SMEs, but it should be taken into account that the use of technologies may vary between a small and a large company. Some larger companies may, in fact, already have this kind of tool.

Mr Levy stressed that it is important to know the criteria which are used to reach conclusions as well as the extent to which the use of the tool also implies compliance with the legal requirements. Consideration should be given to the integration with other areas, e.g. REACH.

Mr Constantinou commented that the tool may be a help in showing that Risk Assessments are not necessarily a major administrative burden.

Item 4: Follow-up to Court of Auditors' report on Sound Financial Management (B/08/07)

Mr Bejer introduced the report and the suggested follow-up actions (presentation available here: <http://extranet.osha.europa.eu/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=994855&objAction=browse&sort=name>)

Mr Cerfeda commented on the need to take into account the specificities of each of the agencies.

Mr Alvarez welcomed the Agency's reply to the report and informed that the Commission would study the issue of procurement in relation to evaluations further.

The Bureau noted the suggested follow-up to the report.

Item 5: EU-OSHA Strategy 2009-2013: Assessing the impacts and following progress (B/08/08)

Mr Takala introduced the issue (presentation available here:

<http://extranet.osha.europa.eu/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=994855&objAction=browse&sort=name>)

Mr Gyorgy commented on the objective as defined on page 4. The vision is not to become the European reference point for OSH information. This is a means, not an objective.

Mr Alvarez welcomed the document and suggested to develop the section on lessons from past experiences further and also the section on European added value.

Ms Asherson considered that the document captured the challenges, was well structured and suggested practical solutions. When the issue of sustainability of the effects is discussed, the changing world of work issue should be considered as this in itself generates new needs for information.

Mr Remaeus referred to work in other fora on the same issue and the problems encountered, and considered on that basis the current document a good basis for discussion of the issue.

Ms Breindl pointed out that it is important to be clear about the national status of the focal points.

Ms Bohm requested that indicators should be sensitive to the added value for key target groups, such as workers' representatives. Furthermore, the Agency should explore how the best use of the enterprise survey can be ensured.

It was agreed that a revised version of the assessment will be presented to the interest groups in November and that the Bureau will come back to the document at its next meeting.

Item 8: Any other business

Mr Constantinou addressed the Bureau, stressing the important role the Agency plays in implementing the Community OSH Strategy.

It was agreed that the Agency would suggest dates for the next Bureau meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Mr Takala on behalf of the Bureau and the Agency thanked Ms Asherson for her contribution to the work of the Agency and the Bureau.