

Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of the Governing Board, 22-23 September 2009

Present:

Mr Remaeus (Chair)

Mr Cerfedda, Ms Breindl, Mr De Meester, Mr György, Mr Frederiksen, Mr Alvarez, Mr Takala, Mr Bejer, Ms De Prado, Ms O'Brien, Ms Murillo, Mr Rial González, Mr Taylor, Mr Smith

Ms Brun, Ms Schneider, Ms Bola, Mr Cockburn and Ms Copsey were present for particular agenda items.

Item 1: Adoption of the revised draft agenda (B/09/A3)

Mr Remaeus welcomed all members to the meeting. **Mr Takala** introduced Ms Marta de Prado, as new administrative agent in Network Secretariat unit.

The amended agenda was adopted.

Item 2: Draft minutes of the last meeting of 19-20 May 2009 (B/09/M2)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Item 3: Status report: Progress on implementation of the 2009 management plan (B/09/05)

Mr Takala introduced the topic of the Seat Agreement and the office building, informing that a letter had been sent from Comm. Spidla to the Spanish Minister of Labour and Immigration, Mr Corbacho. The Agency appreciates the support received from the Commission and is satisfied to see progress towards finding a solution. **Ms Murillo** added that there are also positive developments in the Agency's relations with the Basque Government and the Bilbao town hall. **Mr Cerfedda** asked about the possibility of any movement in this line during the Spanish Presidency. **Mr Takala** replied that the presidency is an excellent opportunity to move ahead on the issue and the Agency will do what it can to exploit that opportunity.

Mr Takala commented his recent visit to ECHA and stressed the unbalanced situation of the two Agencies, considering that OSH is at least as important to EU citizens as chemicals.

Mr De Meester asked if there is any policy in the Agency regarding teleworking. **Mr Takala** said that the nature of the Agency's activities and its staff set a limit on how far one can go in the use of teleworking.

Mr Takala informed the Bureau about the status of the horizontal evaluation of agencies which is now at its final stage. The horizontal evaluation will feed into the inter-institutional dialogue on the future of the Agencies system.

Ms Breindl asked about the OSH opinion poll. **Mr Smith** explained that the opinion poll had been implemented in an economic way via an omnibus survey. The results would be presented at both national and European level. He explained that the idea is to try to attract media attention and that it was not made before because the Agency did not have the necessary instruments. The Bureau was shown the results of the survey while it was stressed that these should not be disseminated any further at the moment.

Mr Gyorgy asked about the formulation on the implementation of the CARDS programme in the progress report. Mr Takala and Ms Bola explained that the institutional capacity for collaboration with the Agency is very different from one country to another. Furthermore, in some countries they had opted for financing some actions themselves.

Item 4: Literature review on work place exposure to nano-particles – presentation of project results

Ms Brun presented the literature review on Nanoparticles carried out last year, and published beginning of 2009.

Mr Alvarez said this was an excellent example of a successful project for identification of new and emerging risks. The agency plays an important role in this area. The attendees said they would follow-up the project.

Item 5: ‘Better health and safety at work through prevention campaign’ – campaign paper (B/09/06)

Mr Smith presented the paper “Better health and safety at work through prevention campaign”.

Mr Cerfeda made the following remarks:

- The points raised at the previous meeting had been reflected in the new paper
- It is difficult to find a definition of “prevention”
- A ‘state of the art’ report would be a very useful resource
- Strategic goals: the campaign must focus on SMEs and pay attention to vulnerable groups, especially now in times of crisis (immigrants, young workers, women etc.)
- The text should be improved in the section “involvement of workers”
- Other than that, Mr Cerfeda found that it is a good document in order to make a good campaign.

Mr De Meester highlighted that the target group should be not only decision makers, but also those who can influence decision makers: banks, intermediaries etc. He also considered that it was a good opportunity to include the A-flue issue, as the development business continuity plans is a good opportunity to highlight the importance of OSH

Mr György suggested including in the page 3 a training programme for employers also, and invited to think over who are the addressees in SMEs.

Ms Breindl said there was a need for considering the campaign material and recommended to find other information tools such as toolkits. **Mr Alvarez** agreed on focusing on vulnerable groups. **Mr Smith** promised to take the suggestions and discuss them with the colleagues.

Ms Brendl asked if the Agency has any idea on how to encourage SMEs to participate in the Good Practice Awards (GPAW). **Mr Taylor** assured that this issue was taken into account very much and that FOPs were involved in pursuing this.

Mr Smith announced various workshops on labour market inclusion, gender issues, migrant workers etc.

The Bureau agreed that the Agency should now redraft the paper taking into account the suggestions from the Bureau, and that a justified proposal for products should be presented for the November Bureau meeting.

Item 6: Internal Audit Service report on 'budget and finance management' (B/09/07)

Ms Murillo introduced the topic of the IAS report received by the Agency in July 2009, which was very positive towards the way the budget and financial issues are being managed. The Court of Auditors report was also very positive towards the Agency. Nevertheless, there are few recommendations. Some of them have already been followed, and some others are ongoing.

Mr Alvarez asked how the Agency is going to deal with the point 1.2 in page 4 "validation of the accounting systems by the Accounting Officer". **Ms Murillo** explained that the Agency changed its accounting system (from SI2 to ABAC) in June 2008. The IAS reminded the Agency (as well as most of the other Agencies) that the accountant has to validate the new accounting system although ABAC is an acknowledged EU secured system developed by the Commission. **Ms Murillo** highlighted that accountant decision certifying validity of the accounting system was produced on 24 June 2009.

The session finished and the attendees were summoned for the second part of the meeting the following day at 9:30h.

Item 7: ORA Steering Group mandate (B/09/08)

The Bureau agreed the mandate

Item 8: Reports on the basis of secondary analysis of ESENER data (B/09/10)

Mr Cockburn introduced the item outlining the proposal and its background. The reports suggested now had been suggested to fulfil the overall goals already agreed for the project.

The Bureau had not further comments.

Item 9: Management of stakeholders' expectations – follow-up to IAS audit report (B/09/11)

Mr Bejer introduced the item stressing that the exercise was about how better to meet the needs with the Agency's activities. The proposals follow the recommendations agreed by the Board in March 2009. The paper presented was a preliminary draft which the Bureau was invited to comment on before a final version would be prepared for the Board.

Mr Cerfeda welcomed the paper but added that some things needed further clarifications. It has to be made clear how different groups of stakeholders will be involved – for example the difference between the role of the Board and other stakeholders who may give non-binding input to the Board decisions but also between stakeholders involved in the preparation and implementation of the project. The fact that the Agency is build on a system of representation also needs to taken into account.

Mr Alvarez recognised that the document addresses the recommendations from the audit service. But more consideration needs to be given to how to involve stakeholders in an effective way.

Item 10: Road transport sector project – presentation of project results

Ms Copsey and **Ms Schneider** presented the project results stressing the fruitfulness of the collaboration between the risk observatory and the working environment information area.

Mr de Meester asked the Agency to make clear which NACE codes it uses.

Item 11: Memorandum of understanding with ECHA (B/09/12)

The Bureau agreed to go ahead and prepare a memorandum for the Board's approval.

Item 12: Any other business

Mr Alvarez provided early information on an agreement which should be adopted by end of 2009 which will allow the EFTA countries to become full Agency members from 1 January 2010. It was recognised that a number of important implementation arrangements are still unclear and need urgent clarification by the Commission.

Mr Alvarez also informed about the Commission guidelines for the selection of the next Agency Director. Bureau members were reminded about the importance of avoiding to bring anyone into a situation of conflict of interest. Expenditures incurred by this selection process are to be clarified by the Commission.

The **Chair** thanked the Bureau members for their attendance and the interpreters for their good work and closed the meeting.