

**MINUTES OF THE 9th MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OF
THE EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK, BILBAO,
17-18 NOVEMBER 1998.**

Introduction and apologies

1. The Chairperson welcomed those present and noted apologies from:

Ms. Reitinger (workers, Austria) for whom Mr. Heider is attending.
Mr. De Lange (employers, Belgium) for whom Mr. Pelegrin is attending.
Mr. Zimalis (employers, Greece) for whom Mr. Tsamousopoulos is attending.
Mr. Giusti (employers, Italy) for whom Mr. Fregoso is attending.
Mr. Sauber (employers, Luxembourg) for whom Dr. Metzler is attending.
Mr. Gómez-Hortigüela (government, Spain) for whom Mr. Martínez de la Gándara is attending.
Mr. Bylund (government, Sweden) for whom Mr. Barrefelt is attending.
Ms. Gibson (workers, UK) for whom Mr. Mellish is attending.
Dr. Purkiss (Observer Member, European Foundation).
Mr. Metsämäki (workers, Finland).
Mr. Nielsen (employers, Denmark).
Mr. Gunkel (employers, Germany).
Mr. Angermaier (workers, Germany).
Mr. Lepore (government, Italy).
Mr. Cabral (government, Portugal).
Mr. Tassin (employers, France) sent his apologies and sent Mr. Thillaud as an Observer.
Mr. Wall (workers, Ireland) sent his apologies and sent Mr. Whelan as an Observer.

Item 1: Adoption of the draft agenda (A/98/2A)

2. The “Code de Conduite” was added to the Agenda at item 9.

The Board adopted the agenda.

3. The Board expressed sorrow at the news of the tragic school bus accident in Asturias on 17 November.

Item 2: Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting, 24-25 February 1998 (A/98/1M)

4. The Chairperson invited comments on the minutes. It was agreed to replace “Spanish National Event” with “Spanish National Week”.

The Board adopted the minutes of the February meeting, with this amendment.

Item 3: Election of new Chairperson and Bureau (A/98/14)

5. The Chairperson explained the procedure for the elections.
6. Members of the Bureau were elected as follows:

Commission:	José Ramón Biosca de Sagastuy Eggehard Rother (may also take part)
Employers' Group:	Janet Asherson Olivier Richard (may also take part)
Government Group:	Richard Clifton Marc Boisnel (may also take part)
Workers' Group:	Marcel Wilders Erik Carlslund (may also take part)

It was **AGREED** to continue with the special designation of a Spanish Government representative as a member of the “may also take part category”.

7. Marcel Wilders was elected as Chair.
8. Thanks were given to Paul Weber, who retires from the Bureau, for his services to the Bureau.

Item 4: Director's Progress Report (A/98/15)

9. In his oral presentation, the Director highlighted the need for further development of the Focal Points and networks including Social Partner input and work with the applicant countries, and to strengthen co-operation with the Commission. A new version of the Internet was being planned. An update of the work of the information projects was presented. The Director then responded to specific questions.
 - As the results of the information requests on asbestos and solvents had been sent to Focal Points and the observers from the European Social Partners, the Agency assumed that they would distribute it. There was now agreement that the results of future requests would be made available on the Internet if appropriate.
 - The proposed pre-board seminar, to which Focal Points would be invited, would be an opportunity to explore issues related to work procedures including Social Partner consultation by Focal Points.

- In order to avoid duplication, the Agency uses Eurostat and Dublin Foundation data as a baseline and then seeks to supplement it, particularly with qualitative information.
- Work with the Turin Training Foundation has been limited to two meetings. The Agency was approached to provide some assistance in obtaining relevant contacts, so the activity can be seen as an information request.
- The Agency will report back to the Board about organising the Consensus Conference under the Research title in the Work Programme.
- An organigram of staff was requested.

Item 5: Designation of Topic Centres (A/98/16a-h)

10. The Director introduced the background to the work of Topic Centres and their relationship to the Agency as a part of its network structure.
11. Ulrich Riese, the Agency's Programme Manager, presented the proposals of the Evaluation Committee which had met to interview Topic Centre candidates. The Evaluation Committee was commended for its work.

The revised diagram showing how Topic Centres relate to the Agency's Structures (Draft Work Programme Annex 4), was AGREED.

12. The diagram depicts: the Board and Bureau as responsible for decision making; Agency responsible for executing those decisions; Focal Points containing a tripartite element; Topic Centres as part of the Agency network; Expert Groups linking the structures together and facilitating participation of all partners in advising the Agency in its work.

The recommendations of the Evaluation Committee in paper A/98/16h were AGREED.

It was AGREED that Topic Centres would be established for 1 year initially, with provision for an extension for an additional two years, subject to Board approval of the extension and specification of detailed activities.

It was AGREED that the Agency would involve the Evaluation Committee during the contracting phase, in particular to identify further organisations that could be involved in order to broaden the basis of participation.

Item 6: Mandates for Agency's Focal Point Group and Expert Groups (A/98/17a-d)

13. The proposals for revised Mandates were introduced by the Director. He explained that membership of each group will be expanded to include one expert acting as an observer, nominated by each of the Employers, Commission and Workers' Groups. A proposal for a new Thematic Network Group (TNG) on OSH Monitoring was also presented.
14. The Director clarified the following: The proposal for the interest groups' representatives to act as observers mirrors the current membership of the Focal Point

group. Those of observer status can have full input and participation. The Agency sees the Focal Points as its key network partner, with Topic Centres acting as consultants to the Agency, monitored by the TNGs. There are existing guidelines on how Focal Points should function in relation to their work with the Agency and the principle of Social Partner involvement is laid down in those guidelines.

i) Focal Points (A/98/17a Revised)

15. The Director clarified that because paragraph 2 bullet point 2 confirmed that Social Partners were part of each Focal Point network, this meant that they should have an input into the other parts of the Focal Point networks mandate as listed in paragraph 2. This includes in particular that work such as information gathering carried out via the Focal Points for the Agency should reflect the views of the Social Partners. It is not therefore necessary to list Social Partners in all the bullet points in Mandate 1.
16. All groups on the Board confirmed their support for active Social Partner involvement in national Focal Point networks and encouragement of its development. The Government group in particular made clear their keen support for the tripartite system.

These clarifications and undertakings having been given, the mandate for the Focal Point network as drafted in paper A/98/17a (Revised) was AGREED.

It was AGREED that the more formalised involvement of Social Partners in the Agency related activities of the national Focal Point networks would be discussed as an agenda item at the next meeting.

ii) Expert Groups (A/98/17a-d)

The Board AGREED the revised Mandates for the Agency's Expert Groups.

The Board AGREED the Mandate for the new Thematic Network Group on OSH Monitoring.

Item 7: Draft Work Programme 1999 (A/98/18)

17. The Director introduced the Work Programme. The Summary had been revised for this meeting following the comments received from the Luxembourg Committee. The revised Summary listed proposed items for prioritisation and for deletion: Work should focus especially on information provision projects; information requests would be handled in a more transparent way; a stepwise approach to project implementation and a common method of specifying detailed project descriptions would be developed; in the future Agency papers could be made available to Board members via the Extranet, which is in the process of development.
18. The Commission announced the transfer of responsibility for "European Week" to the Agency.

19. The following points were made in discussion:

- The Agency needs to ensure transparency in the way it takes on, develops and carries out activities arising from the Work Programme.
- Methodology for carrying out follow up studies should be clearly specified.
- Work on employability/changing world of work should be restricted to health and safety issues.
- Future Work Programmes should be drafted in a more structured way, providing details of individual projects and clear prioritisation.
- Significant Commission information requests should be put forward as Work Programme activities.
- The Agency, Board and Bureau need to review and clearly establish the overall aim and strategy of the Agency. Work Programme activities can then be drafted and prioritised according to this plan.
- The revisions to the Work Programme proposed in the Summary made it much more feasible.

It was AGREED that future work programmes would be drafted to set out specific projects which conform to a set of common criteria agreed by the Board.

It was AGREED that the Board and Bureau would: Review and clarify the Agency's overall aims and goals; set common criteria for project specifications which would include details of source, aims, objectives, resources and budget, methodology, and discrete stages.

The revised draft Work Programme Summary was AGREED.

It was AGREED that the draft Work Programme and all the supporting documents would be amended to align them with the revised Summary, and the items in italics would be deleted.

It was NOTED that there should be appropriate active participation of each Board interest group at Agency organised Conferences.

Item 8: Review of mandates for the Bureau, November 1998 (A/98/19 Revised)

20. A proposal for a revised Mandate 1 was tabled. The Chairperson explained that Mandate 1 needed amending to ensure that the Bureau can assist, in an on-going capacity, in the implementation of the Work Programme.

Revised Mandate 1 was AGREED.

It was AGREED that Mandates 3, 4, 6 and 7 had been discharged.

Item 9: Budget matters (A/98/20-21)

Budget update (A/98/20)

21. This was noted.

Additional item: Code de Conduite (A/98/21b)

22. Mr. Joan M. Pijuan, the Head of Administration, explained the “Code de Conduite”. The implementation of this Code will strengthen transparency vis-à-vis the budgetary authority, as the Agency has to, in all phases of the procedure of adoption of its budget, keep informed this authority about the draft statement of estimates and has to adjust them as necessary to the subsidy decided by the budgetary authority.

The Board AGREED that the Agency should adopt the “Code de Conduite”.

Draft Budget 1999 (A/98/21)

23. The Head of Administration introduced the Draft Budget 1999.

24. The Commission explained that the final budget would be known following the Council decision the next day. The Board had originally proposed a budget of 7 million ECU, the Commission had put forward a budget of 6.5 million ECU. The Council had reduced this and the Parliament had reinstated it to 6.5 million ECU, but holding 10% in reserve, dependent of the “Code de Conduite” being agreed to.

25. In discussion, the following points were made:

- Extent of information provided welcomed.
- The Agency budget shows a 14% increase for 1999. This level of increase would not be realistic for 2000.

The Draft Budget for 1999 was ADOPTED.

Item 10: Proposed dates for Board meetings (A/98/22 Revised 2)

It was **AGREED** that the Board meetings for 1999 would take place on:

4/5 March
23/24 November

with a preboard seminar taking place on 3 March, and that Bureau meetings for 1999 would take place on:

3 March
17/18 June
13/14 September
22 November

Item 13: Follow up to “Priorities and Strategies” report (A/98/24)

26. This item was withdrawn, following acceptance of the revised Summary of the Work Programme.

Item 14: Follow up to “Economic Impact” report (A/98/25)

It was **AGREED** that this item will be tabled at the March meeting.

Item 20: Model for dealing with information requests from the Commission (A/98/29)

27. In response to a question regarding accessibility of the data collected, the Director clarified that all Focal Points and observers from the European Social Partners received a copy of the results, and that it was foreseen that in the future the information would also be put on the Extranet, and on the Internet if appropriate.

Any Other Business

28. The Director referred to a letter from the European Ombudsman concerning a Code of Conduct on good administrative behaviour. The Agency would ensure compliance with this code.

Handover of Chair

29. The Board gave thanks to the outgoing Chair, Janet Asherson for her services, and welcomed the new Chair, Marcel Wilders.

Secretariat, Bilbao
December 1998