

**MINUTES OF THE 12th MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OF
THE EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK, BILBAO,
23-24 FEBRUARY 2000**

Introduction and apologies

The Chairperson welcomed those present including new members:

Jens Jensen attends for the Danish Government as observer until his nomination is formally confirmed.

Leodegario Fernández Sánchez attends for the Spanish Government as observer until his nomination is formally confirmed.

Bertil Remaeus attends for the Swedish Government as observer until his nomination is formally confirmed.

And noted apologies from:

Mr. Finding (governments, Austria).

Mr. Boisnel (governments, France).

Ms. Cypres (workers, Belgium).

Mr. Rasmussen (workers, Denmark).

Mr. Tengberg (workers, Sweden).

Mr. Thillaud (employers, France).

Mr. Sauber (employers, Luxembourg).

Ms. Kafetzopoulou (governments, Greece) for whom Ms. Pissimissi is attending.

Mr. Walsh (governments, Ireland) for whom Ms. Wood is attending.

Ms. Ferraro (governments, Italy) for whom Ms. Rocca-Ercoli is attending.

Item 1: Adoption of the draft agenda (A/00/1A)

The Board adopted the agenda

Item 2. Minutes of the last meeting, 23-24 November 1999 (A/99/2M)

On page 7 the Italian version of the minutes should be amended replace “convivial” with “user friendly”.

The Board adopted the minutes.

Item 3. Action points arising out of the minutes (A/00/1)

The Action Points were accepted.

Item 14 Presentation of the Extranet project

The Agency's extranet manager, Lila Adib Yazdi gave a presentation of developments with the pilot project (OSHANET) based on Circa, for information. Copies of the transparencies used in the presentation were distributed at the meeting. Olivier Richard and Marc Sapir, who are part of the OSHANET pilot group, also described their experiences. A decision about going "live" with the project will be taken after an evaluation in April. All the Board papers are already available on the system.

The following points were raised:

- Importance of the library
- Groups want "within group" closed discussion forums to be available.
- The structuring of documents on the site must follow the Agency's structure, not create a new structure.
- If all the documents from all the various Agency meetings can be found easily on the Extranet this will greatly facilitate the work of Board members and alternates.
- Language is an issue if a local translation programme is not available to users.

Other Members were invited to contact Lila Adib Yazdi if they wanted to participate in the pilot.

Item 4. Director's Progress Report (A/00/2)

An update to the Director's progress report was tabled at the meeting and presented by the Director, who invited members to contribute to the promotion of the European Week, as well as the Agency's new web site.

The Agency was urged to ensure that, at the next Board meeting in November, a substantive amount of good practice examples from Member States will be available, given that this has been in the work programme for several years without input from the Focal Points. It was noted that the collection of these good practice examples is not always easy, but that delivery of a reasonable number of them is a realistic request. The Director confirmed that the technical and procedural issues have been clarified and that he expected a progressive development of good practice information on the national web pages.

The Director clarified that the selection of European Week projects was two-staged. The Focal Points, in co-decision with social partners, nominate projects from those submitted to the Agency. Then, the European Week Group, with representation from all Member States, and the European social partners, takes the final decision, on the basis of the national decisions.

The Board noted the report.

Item 5. Proposal for European Week of Safety and Health at Work – 2001 (A/00/3)

It was explained that the Board needed to take a decision to make a budget bid to hold a European Week in 2001, ahead of the evaluation of Week 2000, to meet the timetable for the budget exercise for 2001. A theme needed to be chosen in order to make the proposal for a bid.

The Board thanked the Agency for the work and materials produced so far for European Week 2000.

The following points were made in discussion:

- It is too early to choose a definitive theme, but it should relate to the work programme and to the on-going work of the Agency.
- For future Weeks, provision should be made to support trans-national projects. This would bring together different Member States and share experiences at the European level.
- It was suggested that the Week could be held bi-annually to allow better preparation, more resources and previous year's evaluation to be available before taking decision on the next year.
- An annual event maintains it as an important promotional activity and keeps the momentum.
- The interest groups and the Commission expressed clear preferences for the subjects "Psychosocial Issues" and "Accidents at Work"
- Psychosocial Issues are a current Board priority, part of the existing work programme and work of the Agency. It is a specific theme that would provide a clear focus for the Week. However, it could be more difficult to get support from employers if they are unclear about the causes and preventative measures that can be taken at enterprise level.
- Accident prevention is a broader theme that would allow flexibility, including a focus on specific sectors. Targets could be set, as some statistical information is available.

The Board AGREED document A/00/03, recognising that a budget bid had to be started despite some reservations.

The Board AGREED that project funding should cover trans-national projects in future years.

The Board AGREED to give the following mandate to the Bureau: To take the final decision on the theme for the proposed European Week 2001.

Item 6. Review of Mandates for the Bureau – March 2000 (A/00/4)

The Board AGREED the current mandates to the Bureau as given in paper A/00/4.

Item 7. State of OSH Report and evaluation (A/00/5)

Points raised in discussion included:

- A great deal of work had gone into the report already, including by the Focal Points, so it should be published in a revised form. Despite best efforts, the hoped for comparability of Member State data was not available in practice, so the reporting model adopted did not fit the data available. In the opinion of three of the four groups, considerable revision would therefore be needed.

- In particular, the richness of qualitative, descriptive information on the State of OSH in the national reports should be included. National context and nuances in the Member State reports had been lost.
- Limitations of data, methodology and ability to draw conclusions, must be clearly explained, for example in an introduction, but also in the body of the text. Where it is possible to draw conclusions, this should be clear.
- Methodology and internal procedures used would need to be reviewed as part of the evaluation of the first exercise.

The Board AGREED that the Agency should undertake further work on the report ahead of publication, taking the following into account:

- **All the points made at this Board meeting by the interest groups.**
- **Points made at the pre-board seminar (particularly Focal Points' requests for amendments) and the draft conclusions from the seminar.**
- **Reconsider the title, taking account of the various proposals made.**
- **Clarify in the introduction the methodology used and the limitations of the exercise.**
- **Reconsider the comparability of the data, particularly where the data is presented in tabular tick boxes as this can distort the results. If necessary, replace the tables with text; indicating what is intended to be expressed.**
- **Consensus paper prepared by employees group and given to informal Bureau meeting, which supported this.**
- **Reconsider the "Major Findings" chapter in the light of the above points.**

As covered by Bureau Mandate 1, it was AGREED that the revised draft would be submitted to and discussed with the Bureau before being published.

Item 8. Proposal for Focus reports arising out of State of OSH (A/00/6)

The Board AGREED that a decision on focus reports could not be taken until the revision of the State of OSH report had been completed.

The decision to postpone the focus reports released funds allocated to this under the 2000 budget.

The Board AGREED that part of the focus reports budget would be used for the revision of the State of OSH report.

The Board discussed a proposal arising from the pre-board seminar to use part of the released focus reports budget to fund a workshop in the autumn of 2000. Using the final report and the national reports as a basis, this workshop could be used to consider future strategies to improve occupational safety and health in Europe and priorities for future action. A workshop would be planned in close co-operation with the Bureau and national networks.

It was AGREED that there was general support for the idea of a workshop, which would be based, in part, on the national reports.

It was AGREED that methodological issues should be looked at when the evaluation project had been completed.

Item 9. Draft 4 year rolling work programme (A/00/7)

The Director introduced the item, explaining that a broad outline for the work programme was being presented at this stage. He asked for feedback on whether the document was in the right direction and within the framework of the Strategy document. The Agency would then prepare a new draft for the Bureau and Focal Points to discuss, before being presented at the November Board meeting.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Should be seen in the light of the evaluation of the Agency. Amendment may be necessary following the evaluation.
- Clarify definition of OSH professionals
- Is there scope to include noise and vibration emissions from machinery and promotion of OSH in the retail sector.
- Include development of better search facilities for the information database.
- Address language issue regarding the database information.
- Due to problems of availability of a full set of statistically comparable data, the Agency could focus on providing descriptions of Member State “systems and programmes”. For example, what are the different data collection methods used, so that these experiences can be shared.
- The final work programme should have a clear focus on some risk areas, according to Board decision.

The timetable for the development of the work programme was discussed:

Focal Points invited to give an input up to 15th May; Advisory Committee interest groups to provide input by 18th May; revised draft to be discussed by June Bureau. Account could be taken of the Commission’s priorities for the future action programme in September. The final work programme should include the possibility for revision, based on an annual review.

The Board AGREED the following mandate to the Bureau: To oversee the preparation of the draft four year rolling work programme 2001-2004 for the Board’s decision in November 2000.

Item 10. Tender for the Evaluation of the Agency (A/00/8)

This paper was sent out by fax the 17/18 February, following consultation with the Bureau. The Board was asked to address whether a maximum budgetary amount should be given in the tender call.

It was reported that the Agency would, in addition, prepare a survey on a future communications strategy.

The Board AGREED that a maximum amount be stipulated in the tender call
The Board AGREED the call for tender.

Item 11. Budget matters (A/00/9-11)

Discharge to the Director in respect of the implementation of the Budget 1998 (A/00/9)

The Commission reported that the Agency had responded satisfactorily to the limited criticisms raised by the Court of Auditors. The Commission therefore supported the discharge.

The Board AGREED the discharge in respect of the implementation of the Budget 1998.

Draft Budget 2001 (A/00/10)

Joan M. Pijuan, Resource Manager, introduced the draft budget proposal for 2001. The proposed budget represents an increase due to: a) the European Week 2001; b) the cost of living increase and 3) to cover necessary human resources in the network secretariat (A post) and in the Information and Communication unit (A post and B post). The draft job descriptions were given to Board Members for information.

The Commission said that the Agency was requesting an 8% budget increase. A 2.5% increase would be needed to cover inflation. The Commission could support an increase of 2.5% of the 1999 budget amount (plus 0.9 MEUR carried over for the European Week 2000) and an additional 900,000 EURO to cover the 2001 European Week. They explained that the Commission would have to work within a zero increased budget overall, so if they were to provide an increase to the Agency, they would have to meet that with a cut elsewhere.

It was AGREED that the Agency would provide the Board with a clearer justification of the proposed additional posts, particularly with regard to the needs of the work programme. If such a justification can be provided, then the Board could accept the proposed draft budget 2001.

Non automatic carry-overs (A/00/11)

It was explained that the Board needed to agree to a non-automatic carry over of 900,000 EURO, as it had not been possible to sign the contracts for European Week in 1999.

The Board ADOPTED the non-automatic carry over.

Item 12. Agency Personnel Policy (A/00/12)

Joan M. Pijuan, Resource Manager, introduced this item. The Board was asked to approve the formal adoption by the Agency of a number of items under the Staff Regulations, items 1 to 8 in the paper.

Regarding items 1 to 8 the Board ADOPTED the decision on certain general provisions for the implementation of the staff regulations.

Regarding items 9 and 10 the Agency proposed to adapt these to the Agency's structure.

The Board AGREED to give the Director a mandate to adapt items 9 and 10 and consult on the proposals with the Agency's staff committee and the Commission's Statute Committee before their adoption.

Under this item the opportunity was taken to welcome the formation of the staff committee, with reference to the principle of consultation and full involvement of staff in every organisation and particularly so in a quadripartite organisation.

Item 13: Any other business

M Tassin

Text hidden based on the exceptions covered in Article 4 of Regulation No 1049/2001.

Spanish Construction Sector trades union national strike 24-25 February.

The employees group raised this item. They expressed their concern over the high number of deaths and accidents in the Spanish construction sector. They expressed their support for the aims of the strike that included: Adoption of a proposed regulation on subcontracting in the sector; compliance with and enforcement of health and safety regulations and agreements; increased rights for safety representatives. Quoting from a report of the European Construction Federation, they gave evidence that the directive on temporary and mobile sites was not being complied with and called on all employers to comply with it. They said the situation demonstrated the effect of the labour market on health and safety and that this should be taken into account in future work programmes.

The Chairperson added that high accident rates in the construction sector were a concern in many Member States.

Emerging risks and changes in work organisation conference, Portugal 8-9 June

The Portuguese Government representative informed the meeting that this conference was being organised during the Portuguese presidency in collaboration with the Agency. Members were invited to attend.

It was noted that the Bureau meeting had been moved forward a day to 6-7 June.

Interpretation at Board Meetings.

A statement was made that although Italian was now available in the employers interest group meeting, this was passive and the whispering disturbed other group Members.

Members were informed that, from the next meeting, the rooms in which interest groups met would be rotated to ensure a fairer distribution of interpretation facilities.

An additional request was made that interpretation facilities should be available in the language of the country holding the current presidency.

Item 14- 20: Information papers

Some additional papers were tabled in the information section.

- Budget issues-Automatic Carry Over
- *European Week 2000* update following meeting of the European Week Group on 7/8 February and copies of the Fact-sheets and information leaflets produced for the launch in Portugal, February 11th. These are being translated into all languages and

will be available on the Agency web site. Members were invited to promote the Week.

- Regarding the Agency web site launch, Members were provided with a diskette with advertisements for the site in national language and with national URL. Members were invited to promote the site using this product.

Secretariat, Bilbao
March 2000