

**MINUTES OF THE 24TH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK.
Bilbao, 21 March 2006**

The **Chairperson** welcomed those present and in particular:

New Members

Special welcome for:

Mr Buet (employers, France)

Ms Lischka (workers, Austria)

Mr McMillan (European Commission)

Mr Robertson (workers, UK)

Ms Spiliopoulou (European Commission)

And noted the **apologies** from:

Mr Bergström (workers, Sweden)

Ms Böhm (workers, Slovenia)

Ms Breindl (government, Austria) for whom Ms Szymanski attends.

Mr Burisín (employers, Czech Republic)

Mr Christodoulou (government, Greece) for whom Ms Pissimissi attends.

Mr Engels (employers, Luxembourg)

Mr Feringa (government, the Netherlands) for whom Mr den Held attends.

Mr Gauci (government, Malta)

Mr Gergely (workers, Hungary) for whom Mr Gyorgy attends.

Mr Holtmann (employers, Germany)

Mr Hurmalainen (government, Finland) for whom Mr Yrjänheikki attends

Ms Iglesias (employers, Spain) for whom Mr Teixido attends

Mr Karppinen (European Foundation)

Mr Korcagins (employers, Latvia)

Mr Link (employers, Estonia) for whom Ms Kibe attends

Mr Pedersen (employers, Denmark) for whom Mr Nielsen attends.

Ms Schröder (workers, Germany)

Mr Simerka (government, Czech Republic) for whom Ms Kubickova attends.

Mr Soon (workers, Estonia)

Mr Sukovsky (government, Slovakia) for whom Ms Bartunková attends
Mr Whelan (workers, Ireland)

Item 1 – Adoption of the revised draft agenda (G/06/A1)

The following documents were tabled:

- Revised draft agenda (G/06/A1)
- Update to the Director's Progress Report and annexes (G/06/02)
- List of participants

The Chair explained that it had been foreseen to appoint the next Agency Director at this Board meeting. However, as the Agency had been informed by the Commission that there would be no short-list of candidates before the meeting of the Board, the appointment had to be postponed. The Agency and the Chair recognized the unfortunate situation created for some Board members. However, this situation was caused by decisions beyond the responsibility of the Chair and the Agency.

The revised draft agenda was adopted.

Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting, 13 December 2005 (A/05/M2)

The Board adopted the minutes.

Item 3 – Prolongation of mandate for chair and vice-chairs (G/06/01)

The Board agreed to prolong the mandates for the chair, the vice-chairs and the Bureau until March 2007.

Item 4 – Director's Progress Report (G/06/02)

The Director referred to the documents tabled and added the following comments:

- The new requirement in the amendment to the Agency Regulation from 2005 about entering cooperation agreements with EU focal points is being implemented and 20 agreements have been signed.
- The Agency has cooperated with a working group with focal point representatives on revising the grant scheme for focal points to increase additionality of the grants. After having consulted the focal points on draft guidelines for the scheme, the Agency now suggests not to run a HWI grant scheme in 2006. This issue will be discussed under agenda item 10
- A contract has been signed with the Commission on a PHARE IV programme for Turkey and Croatia.
- The Agency has run an on-line survey of web-site users. More than 5000 people have responded. The results of the survey will be communicated to the Board.
- Preparation of the EW 2006 campaign is well advanced. Good Practice award guidelines are available on the Internet together with the EW leaflet. The campaign website will be available end March. Also in March a stakeholder meeting is foreseen. The launch will take place in June.

- Two new web-features have been published: One on agriculture and one on the EW 2006.
- Preparations are being finalized for the 1st phase of the HWI campaign. This involves the creation and production of a campaign web-site, translation of all promotional material into EU-10 languages, Bulgarian and Romanian, and finalization of the targeting strategy, seminar tour and press campaign.
- A note has been forwarded on the status of the Risk Observatory before the Board meeting, however it should be mentioned that the OSH Outlook 2005 is undergoing consultation, that all expert surveys on emerging risks have been finished and that reports on chemical and biological risks are about to be finalised.
- At the Agency the previous Working Environment Unit and Information and Communication Unit have been merged into an OSH centre with 3 units: Risk Observatory Unit with Eusebio Rial-Gonzalez as head of unit, Working Environment Information Unit with Terry Taylor as head of unit and Communication and Promotion Unit with Andrew Smith as head of unit.

Following a request from Ms Szymanski, the Director confirmed that SLIC had decided there should not be established a formal cooperation between SLIC and the Agency. Instead the Agency should go directly to the national labour inspectorates, which in many cases would mean the focal points.

The Board noted the report

Item 5 – Draft work programme 2007 (G/06/03)

The Director introduced the item. The current preliminary draft was a revised version of the document discussed at the seminar in December. One of the issues discussed in December was the inclusion of a new priority group. There was no consensus at the seminar, but the group attracting most support was ‘Cleaning Workers’ and therefore a project sheet for activity on this group had been prepared. Furthermore, the work programme included the proposal for a company survey in the context of the Risk Observatory providing an additional EUR 400.000 was provided.

Ms Schweng requested the following changes to the project sheet on cleaning workers:

- a more neutral wording on issues like wages and training
- if stress was to be included as an OSH issue faced by cleaners it should be put into context
- falls from heights should be included as an OSH issue and be given a higher priority than e.g. stress
- the project should result in easy-to-use templates for risk assessment for all groups of cleaners

As regards the Risk Observatory, **Ms Schweng** stressed the need for a Board seminar in 2007 as a condition for supporting the inclusion of a company panel. The seminar should focus on strategic issues related to the Risk Observatory.

Mr Lopes supported the request for a seminar on the Risk Observatory and commented on the European Week 2006, stressing that the inclusion of the education sector should not lead to a marginalisation of tri-partism.

Mr Lusi reminded the Board that a new Community OSH Strategy may be ready later this year. It is important to take this into account in the planning of the Agency’s work.

Mr Biosca de Sagastuy supported the need for a seminar on the Risk Observatory. As for the European Week 2008 on Risk Assessment, it is important to avoid a legalistic focus. Risk Assessments are not important because they are a legal obligation, but because they are a necessary step in the company's prevention policy.

The Director thanked the Board for the comments and confirmed that the project sheet on cleaners would be reworded and that it would be stressed that tri-partism is an important element in the 2006 European Week. Furthermore, the Board was informed that the amendment suggested under item 10 to the HWI project would mean that the Agency would cover the costs via the contractor, but that it would be necessary that the focal points contribute to the campaign. At the next focal point meeting, the organization of the campaign would be specified. As regards the new OSH Strategy, this should be reflected in the next Rolling Work Programme, while as for 2007 it is important for the planning of work already now to agree the general guidelines.

The Board agreed the 2007 work programme with the comments given.

Item 6 – Draft budget and establishment plan 2007 (G/06/04)

The Director highlighted the proposed EUR 400.000 for the Risk Observatory to run the company survey as discussed under the previous agenda item, the EUR 150.000 to cover costs following enlargement and the proposal to establish an additional two A-posts to meet the extra workload following enlargement and to follow up on the recommendations made by the Internal Audit Service.

Ms Schweng made clear that the employers' support to the proposed budget was conditioned by the agreed in-depth discussion on the strategy for the Risk Observatory.

Mr Biosca de Sagastuy informed that the financial perspectives may make it necessary to continue in 2007 with an unchanged budget. Furthermore, if the Agency will ask for two additional posts it would have to explain the reason for the relatively high number of vacant posts.

The Director replied that the recruitment processes for the Agency are lengthy due to the formal requirements. The Agency has tried to establish reserve lists, but experience has shown that this has not been successful in all cases. It is therefore almost impossible with a certain mobility amongst its temporary staff to avoid that there are vacant posts which cannot be filled immediately. This means, that by not providing the two additional posts, the real number of Agency staff would be lower than otherwise.

The Board adopted the 2007 budget and establishment plan

Item 7 – Amendment to budget 2006 (G/06/05)

The Director explained that the amendment was necessary to reflect the actual distribution of PHARE III funds and to include funding for PHARE IV activities in 2006.

The Board adopted the proposed amendment to the 2006 budget

Item 8 – Internal Control Standards (G/06/06)

The Director explained that the Agency suggested adopting 24 control standards as the basis for its internal control system. The control standards should contribute to assuring the Director that the Agency reaches its objectives. The proposed 24 standards are based on equivalent standards for the Commission and covers five key control areas: Control

environment, Performance and risk management, Information and communication, Control activities, and Audit and evaluation.

The Board adopted the proposed 24 Internal Control Standards

The Director explained that in 2005 the Agency had been audited by the Commission's Internal Audit Service against the standards used by the Commission. Even though this meant that the Agency was compared to a much larger organisation, the Internal Audit Service did not identify any 'critical' or 'unsatisfactory' issues. However, there the IAS had made 7 'very important' recommendations, which the Agency now intends to implement.

Mr Remaeus asked if the Agency and the Commission agreed with the IAS comment about Board members being in a situation of conflict of interest.

Mr Biosca de Sagastuy suggested that the Agency explains the IAS the background to this situation. It should be taken into account how the Agency has been established in the Council Regulation. It is not a conflict of interest as the Council has wanted that governments are represented both in the Board and as focal points.

The Director confirmed that the Agency will discuss the issue with the IAS after internal analysis of the comment. It should, however, be noted that the Court of Auditors never has commented on this issue or raised it as a problem.

The Board noted the Internal Audit Report.

Item 9 – Provisional decision on Board meeting dates 2007 and number of Bureau meetings (G/06/07)

The Board agreed to mandate the Bureau to set the Board meeting dates from 2007 on. It was also agreed that the Bureau would meet 4 times per year from 2007 on.

Item 10 – Amendment of 2006 work programme (G/06/11)

The Director explained that after having received a number of comments from the EU-10 focal points on the proposed HWI grant scheme, the Agency had concluded that the implementation of HWI grant scheme would not create added value justifying the administrative and financial burden on the Agency and the focal points. Therefore, the Agency suggested amending the 2006 work programme in order not to run the HWI grant scheme in 2006.

The Board agreed the proposed amendment to the 2006 work programme.

Item 11 – Appointment of Director

The Board agreed that:

- the appointment of the Director will take place in Luxembourg on 3 May
- there will be a short break for interest group meetings after the presentations from the candidates
- each candidate should be invited to give a presentation of 15 minutes on the theme, 'the visions of the candidates about the Agency's role over the next 10 years' in English, French, German, Italian or Spanish.

Mr Biosca de Sagastuy confirmed that it would be possible to arrange the meeting for the appointment of the Director on 3 May in connection with the Advisory Committee meeting.

The Chair requested that the Commission forward the list of candidates with CVs etc. in due time.

Item 12 – Any other business

At the request from **the Chair**, **the Director** gave an explanation about a letter from Union Syndicale sent to the Board members.

Mr Remaeus raised the issue of language checking which is a cause of growing concern in the governments' group. There are problems with the quality of the translations done by the Translations Centre causing an additional workload for the focal points.

The Director confirmed that the Agency is aware of the problem. It is being discussed on an ongoing basis with the focal points and the Translations Centre. The Director suggested that a letter should be sent from the Chair to the Chair of the Board of the Translation Centre and the Director of the Centre stressing the unsatisfying situation.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked Mr Konkolewsky for his important contribution as Agency Director during 10 years.

The Director thanked the Board for its confidence and support to him in his work as Director for the Agency.

List of participants:

	NAME	INTEREST GROUP	COUNTRY
1	ADAMAKIS Ioannis	Workers	GREECE
2	ANTAPSONS Ziedonis	Workers	LATVIA
3	ASHERSON Janet L.	Employers	UNITED KINGDOM
4	BARTUNKOVÁ Elena	Government	SLOVAK REPUBLIC
5	BÉKÉES András	Government	HUNGARY
6	BIOSCA DE SAGASTUY J.R.	European Commission	EU
7	BUET Nathalie	Employers	FRANCE
8	CASANO Luigi	Employers	ITALY
9	CERFEDA Walter	Workers	BELGIUM
10	DEGRAND-GUILLAUD Anne	European Commission	EU
11	DEN HELD Martin	Government	THE NETHERLANDS
12	FONCK Herman	Workers	BELGIUM
13	FREDERIKSEN Jan Kahr	Workers	DENMARK
14	GALLI Gabriella	Workers	ITALY
15	GIARDIN Antoine	Workers	LUXEMBOURG
16	GYÖRGY Károly	Workers	HUNGARY
17	HESELMANS Marc	Government	BELGIUM
18	JANICKA Julia Rola	Employers	POLAND
19	JANNERFELDT Eric	Employers	SWEDEN
20	JENSEN Jens	Government	DENMARK
21	KAADU Tiit	Government	ESTONIA
22	KELLY Daniel	Government	IRELAND
23	KIRALVARGA Miroslav	Employers	SLOVAK REPUBLIC
24	KONING J.J.H.	Employers	THE NETHERLANDS
25	KUBICKOVA Daniela	Government	CZECH REPUBLIC
26	KYRIAKONGONAS Pavlos	Employers	GREECE
27	LISCHKA Julia	Workers	AUSTRIA
28	LOPES Luis	Workers	PORTUGAL
29	LOPEZ ARIAS Tomás	Workers	SPAIN
30	LUSIS Renars	Government	LATVIA

31	MCMILLAN Jacques	European Commission	EU
32	MOZURA Gediminas	Workers	LITHUANIA
33	NICOLAIDES Leandros	Government	CYPRUS
34	NIELSEN Thomas Philbert	Employers	DENMARK
35	ONELLI Paolo	Government	ITALY
36	PELEGRIN André	Employers	BELGIUM
37	PERIMÄKI DIETRICH Raili	Workers	FINLAND
38	PETRICEK Tatjana	Government	SLOVENIA
39	PICCOLI Robert	Government	FRANCE
40	PINILLA GARCIA Javier	Government	SPAIN
41	PISSIMISSI Matina	Government	GREECE
42	PODGÓRSKI Daniel	Government	POLAND
43	POMAJBÍK Lubos	Workers	CZECH REPUBLIC
44	RAMPÁSEK Peter	Workers	SLOVAK REPUBLIC
45	REMAEUS Bertil	Government	SWEDEN
46	RIESE Ulrich	Government	GERMANY
47	ROBERTSON Hugh	Workers	UNITED KINGDOM
48	SABAITIENE Aldona	Government	LITHUANIA
49	SCHWENG Christa	Employers	AUSTRIA
50	SEITZ Gilles	Workers	FRANCE
51	SPILIOPOULOU Maria	European Commission	EU
52	SZYMANSKI Eva-Elisabeth	Government	AUSTRIA
53	TEIXIDO CAMPAS Pere	Employers	SPAIN
54	WALTKE Natascha	Employers	BELGIUM
55	WEBER Paul	Government	LUXEMBOURG
56	YRJÄNHEIKKI Erkki	Government	FINLAND
57	KONKOLEWSKY Hans-Horst	European Agency	
58	BEJER Jesper	European Agency	
59	BLANCH José G.	European Agency	
60	RIAL-GONZALEZ, Eusebio	European Agency	
61	SMITH Andrew	European Agency	
62	TAYLOR Terry	European Agency	