

ACTION POINTS

Meeting:	EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD
Date:	30 September 2024
Venue:	Online

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Chairperson welcomed the participants and introduced the draft agenda. Before working through the agenda, she asked the participants to declare whether they may have a conflict of interests with any of the items of the draft agenda. No Executive Board member reported any.

The main business for this meeting was to follow up on the Management's Board request to discuss and agree on a title for the Healthy workplaces Campaign due to start in 2026, following the Management Board's agreement on the strategy at their meeting in June 2024.

The Agency would also update the Executive Board on a number of issues, including progress on the preparation of the new EU-OSHA' strategy and the Commission would provide their usual update.

There were no suggestions for any AOB item.

CONCLUSION: The Executive Board adopted the draft agenda.

2. TITLE OF THE HEALTHY WORKPLACES CAMPAIGN 2026-2028

At the Management Board meeting in June, the Management Board agreed the campaign strategy.

The strategy is the outcome of an extensive and broad consultation process with the Management Board. Having the campaign strategy agreed at an early stage is helpful to ensure that the Agency's work on the campaign is grounded on a shared understanding of the campaign's objectives.

At the June meeting, the Management Board mandated the Executive Board to discuss the Management Board's feedback on the title of the campaign and agree on a final title. The two options that had received broad support from across the interest groups and the Commission and no expression of strong opposition were:

- "Together for mental health at work",
- "Mental health matters at work"

The discussions at the Executive Board focussed on these two options.

Whereas the GIG expressed preference for the former option in a first instance, during the discussions across the three groups and the Commission the preferences converged around the option "Together for mental health at work". This option seemed more suitable to convey a sense of proactiveness and the active involvement of all parties at the workplace. These are both key elements to successfully tackle such a complex and multifaceted OSH challenge.

The Executive Board and the Agency acknowledged that the technically accurate terminology to refer to the problem is psychosocial risks at work – but from the communication and promotion point of view, the phrase "mental health at work" was considered as more effective and recognisable and the one that can be more widely applied across the Member States.

The concept of mental health is also anchored in the broader policy context, cf. the Commission's political guidelines.

The title should not be considered in isolation – the strategy is very explicit in its intention to address psychosocial risks at work. When communicating and promoting, the content can be contextualised according to the needs and language requirements at the level of the Member States, as the long-standing practice has been so far. The campaign will also serve as an education tool to mainstream the more accurate but also technical concept of psychosocial risks at work into the mainstream language. The campaign strategy explicitly wants to contribute to this objective across its five pillars. In the product development, the Agency will also ensure that references to psychosocial risks are included as appropriate.

The WIG however remarked that, whereas they could agree on the campaign title as discussed by the Executive Board, it would be important to make an explicit reference to psychosocial risks at work, for example in a subtitle.

The Executive Board did not receive any mandate to discuss and agree subtitles for the campaign, but just the title. The WIG may follow-up on this discussion at the next Management Board meeting. The Agency will start working based on the title agreed by the Executive Board.

CONCLUSIONS: The Executive Board agreed “Together for mental health at work” for the Healthy workplaces campaign 2026-2028.

3. UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Under this item, the Commission provided an update on several issues:

New incoming Commission

The Commission updated the Executive Board on the process towards a new Commission. After the election by the European Parliament of Ursula Von Der Leyen as President of the European Commission on 18 July, the list of Commissioners-designates with their corresponding portfolio has been put forward. There are six Executive Vice-Presidencies – four of which led by women and two by men as well as twenty Commissioners. One of the Vice-Presidents is Roxana Mînzatu, from Romania who received the portfolio of people, skills and preparedness – which includes OSH. It is the first time that OSH is included in the portfolio of an Executive Vice-President.

The Commissioners-designate, including the Executive Vice-Presidents, will now have to attend their hearings with the relevant Parliament Committees to get their consent (or not) before the College can be constituted. There is no exact date yet for such hearings to be held – but it is expected that they will be around October/November.

At the moment of her election, Ursula Von der Leyen presented the political guidelines that would guide the Commission's action under her new tenure.

There are some important references to OSH matters, in particular the need for a preventive health approach – especially on mental health and circulatory diseases, and the need to build on the work already done in relation to health preparedness. A new action plan for the implementation of the European Pillar for Social Rights is also mentioned. Other OSH-relevant issues that featured in the political guidelines are digitalisation and its impact on the world of work, including AI management, telework and impact on mental health, and the initiative related to the right to disconnect; wages, skills and training; and the design and implementation of a quality jobs roadmap. These issues have been reflected in the mission letter of the Executive Vice President-designate Mînzatu.

The Agency has identified some priorities where EU-OSHA can provide support and will carefully analyse this together with the Management Board.

The Workers regretted that plans for the new Commission would eliminate the position to Employment and Social Affairs, limiting its responsibilities to a "People, Skills, and Preparedness" portfolio. Moreover, concerns were expressed that the guidelines set out by President Von Der Leyen and the mission letters to members of the College of Commissioners focus heavily on competitiveness and deregulation. The European trade union movement stands united in opposing the return of austerity policies, which have proven ineffective and place undue burdens on working people.

The Workers raised concerns regarding the potential shift of competence over OSH matters from the European Parliament's EMPL Committee to the SANT Committee, which is currently under discussion. This change would also affect the oversight of EU-OSHA, currently under the remit of the EMPL Committee.

Commission's opinion to EU-OSHA's draft SPD 2025-2027

The Commission's opinion is largely positive about the Agency's planned work for 2025 and beyond and acknowledges good alignment with the EU policy priorities on OSH across the six strategic objectives and activities proposed.

The opinion points to a number of different actions of technical nature where the Agency is called to contribute, in particular in relation to topics such as the new world of work, interconnectivity, digitalisation, robotics; and to specific sectors, including agriculture, health and care, transport and firefighters.

Regarding budget and human resources issues, the Commission encouraged the agencies to keep up the good rate of budget execution and congratulated the Agency on reaching gender balance at management level.

The Agency will circulate the Commission's opinion to the Management Board shortly.

The Agency is currently finalising the SPD 2025-2027 and takes the Commission opinion into account. A particular focus is on how the Agency can provide the support on tasks requiring a high level of technical expertise and at the same time deliver the work programme.

Evaluation of EU-OSHA, Eurofound, Cedefop and ETF

The Commission's staff working document on the evaluation on four out of the five agencies under DG EMPL's remit was published on Friday 27 September.

The evaluation is all in all positive for the four agencies, who have achieved many of their general, specific and operational objectives and their overall activities and outputs are well aligned with EU priorities and adapted well to changes in EU policy.

In particular with regard to EU-OSHA, the Agency provided a significant contribution to the implementation of the EU OSH Strategic Framework and strongly supported policy-making with its actions on COVID-19 and the Healthy Workplaces campaigns. EU-OSHA contributes to enhance social dialogue and cooperation among social partners.

The evaluation also identified potential improvements. For example, the Agency could better fine-tune its work in specific areas to target audiences; could further explore how to create impact in those Member States that are less advanced on OSH; further increase its good cooperation with the Commission, in particular its efforts to disseminate its outputs through the Commissions services, and further engage with DG GROW and EEN. Whereas EU-OSHA cooperates well with the other three agencies and ELA, there is also room for further cooperation. Some internal processes could also be further improved to increase cost effectiveness – in particular with relation to translation and procurement.

As a follow-up to this evaluation, the agencies should elaborate an action plan to outline concrete measures to meet these recommendations within six months.

The Agency will prepare a draft action plan addressing the recommendations included in the Commission's Staff Working Document for the Management Board to discuss at their meeting in December.

The Executive Director provided the Executive Board with an update on the latest developments.

Update on strategy development

The strategy development is progressing well. The Management Board seminar in June resulted in a valuable first-hand input from the Agency's key stakeholders on where the Agency should go over the next 10 years.

The Management Board agreed that focussing on three main strategic lines of actions, considering the Agency's resource constraints and leveraging on the Agency's network capacity is the path to pursue to achieve greater impact.

The Management Board's feedback has been captured in a report, that has been distributed to the Executive Board for information and later to the Management Board.

Based on the internal discussions with an active engagement of staff, the evidence gathered through the evaluation of the past strategy, stakeholders' feedback, Focal points' input and finally Management Board's input, the Agency prepared a first draft.

The document is a rather high-level document which defines what the Agency wants to achieve across its research work, resources provision and networking promotion and facilitation and identifies key success factors. In addition, it defines a vision for EU-OSHA as well as the values which should underpin the strategy implementation.

The staff is now being consulted on this first draft and a consolidated version will be shared with the Executive Board in advance to the meeting in October (approx. 2 weeks before the meeting).

During the strategy discussion – both internally with the staff and externally with the Focal Points and the Management Board, a number of very important issues for consideration and improvement have been identified. Whereas these issues are relevant to the strategy and are expected to support the achievement of the strategy's objectives, they have not been directly included in the strategy because their nature is more operational (examples: better engagement with Member States; targeting outputs to target audiences etc.) The Agency will follow up on all these issues in parallel to the strategy development process and its implementation.

An important element that the Agency will have to take into account is the outcome of the four agencies' evaluation. The Agency will carefully analyse the Commission's Staff working Document and reflect it into the strategy as appropriate. There is a first indication that the issues raised in the document have already been addressed in the current work and discussions.

The next steps will be:

- Consolidation of the draft strategy after staff's input
- Communication of the draft strategy to the Executive Board by mid-October
- Executive Board meeting on 23 October – where the draft strategy will be discussed
- Consolidation of the draft strategy after the Executive Board's consultation
- Management Board's online seminar on the draft strategy on 8 November
- FOP meeting on 18/20 November – Focal points discussion on the implication of the implementation of the strategy in their work
- Discussion and adoption of the draft strategy by the Management Board at Management Board meeting on 4-5 December

Non-substantial amendments to the work programme 2024

Whereas the implementation of the work programme is largely on track, some adjustments are needed to the work programme. These amendments qualify as non-substantial (they don't change the nature or the scope of the activity and remain within the thresholds re budget and procurement established in the Management Board's decision).

These are:

- The output "OSH Pulse" is added (with an indicative amount of EUR 595.000). This output was included in the draft 2025 work programme but is moved forward.
- The output "Dangerous Substance e-guide – update of technical platform" is added (with an indicative budget of EUR 100.000)

The funds have been made available through a lower-than-expected expenditure on:

- Building-associated costs and interinstitutional services for T2,
- WES and multilingualism for T3

Programming for 2026 (draft Single Programming Document 2026-2028)

The Agency has started programming for 2026.

With the move to two hybrid meetings per year, the discussion and agreement of the draft SPD 2026-2028 has been brought forward to the December meeting.

The Agency is preparing an ex-ante evaluation for a new OSH overview on Work-related accidents, which will be presented to the OKAG and the Executive Board, before it is discussed and agreed with the Management Board in December as part of the agreement on the draft SPD 2026-2028.

EU-OSHA will not prepare a separate draft budget document for 2026 for agreement at the Management Board 2024 December meeting, as the resources information included in the SPD should fully cover the Management Board's information needs and the requirements in the financial regulation.

The Management Board will receive the final version of the budget – which is based on the data and information included in the SPD – for adoption at their meeting in December 2025.

EU /Japan dialogue

OSH is part of the agenda for discussions between the Commission and Japan with two milestones in the next 9 months:

- Working Group for the preparation of the 20th EU-Japan Labour Dialogue, where the Agency will be involved. A Japanese delegation will visit EU-OSHA on 4 October and EU-OSHA will participate in the dialogue in July 2025 in Tokyo.
- OSH will also feature in the Osaka EXPO in 2025 at which the Agency organising jointly with EMPL an OSH symposium on digitalization in July.

Exchange of view with the European Parliament's EMPL committee

The next exchange of views of the Executive Directors of the five EMPL agencies with the European Parliament's EMPL Committee is scheduled on 14 October.

This is a regular appointment – usually to present the achievements of the past work programme and to present the work planned for the following year. With the new Parliament taking up office, the focus this time will be rather on how the agencies have contributed to the Parliament's work in the past legislative term and how they could contribute to the EU policy priorities in the future – green, digital and just transition and demographic change.

Engaging with the Parliament is very important for EU-OSHA and is part of its commitment to proactively support the policy cycle through its work.

The format will be a short presentation by each Agency, followed by a Q&A session with the members of the European Parliament.

The independent experts appointed by the Parliament to the Agencies' Management Board will also contribute with their views on the Agency's work. For EU-OSHA, there will be no such report, as our expert, Johan Danielsson, was elected as a MEP and as such had to step down from his position and is now serving as Vice-Chairperson of the EMPL Committee. The EMPL Committee will soon nominate a new expert for EU-OSHA.

The exchange of view will be web-streamed – the Agency will circulate the link once available.

AGM tool implementation and updated rules for expert reimbursement

As explained during the Management Board meeting in June, EU-OSHA will start using a new system (AGM) that will replace the current manual travel cost reimbursement process for experts. This system is designed to calculate the reimbursement costs based on the rules of the Commission, which are currently different to the ones used by EU-OSHA. Considering the advantages AGM will bring in terms

of efficiency, audit trail and clarity, EU-OSHA would like to adopt the rules applied by the Commission with some amendments, e.g. the possibility to reimburse accommodation and subsistence costs to government representatives.

The rules currently in force were adopted by the Management Board in January 2017. Given the administrative nature of the matter and in line with the approach followed by other Agencies, EU-OSHA suggests that the new decision would be taken at the level of the Executive Director. To do that, the Agency will soon run a written procedure with the Management Board to:

- Mandate the Executive Director to repeal the current rules
- Mandate the Executive Director to adopt new rules, in line with the Commission's rules.

The main changes these rules and the use of the AGM system will bring are the following:

- Meeting invitees will need an ECAS account to access AGM, accept the invitation received, and make their reimbursement requests after each meeting
- Fixed Daily allowance of €113 and fixed ceiling of accommodation allowance of €168. The Daily allowance and the accommodation ceilings will no longer depend on the place the meeting is held.
- Accommodation allowance is a ceiling, not a fixed amount. It will not be a flat rate allowance but a reimbursement upon presentation of supporting documents (receipts of hotels, etc..).
- All participants will need to submit their requests maximum 30 days after each meeting

When launching the written procedure with the Management Board, the changes will be duly highlighted.

EU-OSHA will provide support during the reimbursement process. Management Board members should be relatively familiar with the tool as it is the same tool in use at the Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work.

Regarding the timeline for its implementation, the objective is to start using AGM to support the reimbursement process already for the Focal Points meeting in November and the Management Board meeting in December – but this depends on the working pace/calendar of the EC onboarding team – so this remains to be confirmed. The implementation may be gradual.

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As there was no AOB issue raised at the beginning of the meeting, the Chairperson thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.