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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION  
TO THE COUNCIL**

**regarding the Commission's report  
on the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work**

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

### REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S REPORT ON THE EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

1. Council Regulation EC No 2062/94<sup>1</sup> of 18 July 1994 establishing a European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, as amended by Council Regulation EC No 1643/95<sup>2</sup> of 29 June 1995, contains in its Article 23 a review clause. This provides that no later than five years after the entry into force of the Regulation, on the basis of a Commission report accompanied, as appropriate, by a proposal, the Council, having consulted the European Parliament, shall review this regulation, and any new assignment for the Agency that proves necessary. According to its Article 24, Council Regulation EC No 2062/94 entered into force on 9 September 1994 and consequently the above mentioned review should have been completed by the end of 1999.
2. Article 8 of Regulation EC No 2062/94 establishes an Administrative Board. Taking into account the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden, Council Regulation (EC) No 1643/95 of 29 June 1995, adjusted the composition of the Administrative Board.

Further to Council Decision of 5 October 1995 on the appointment of members and alternate members of the Administrative Board of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the Administrative Board held its first meeting on 25 and 26 October 1995.

3. In accordance with Article 11 of Regulation EC 2062/94 the Agency shall be headed by a Director appointed by the Administrative board, on a proposal from the Commission, for a period of five years. The Director is the official representative of the Agency and is accountable to the Administrative board for his activities (Article 11 of Regulation No 2062/94). The Director was appointed on 3 July 1996 and took up office in September 1996.

Given the essential responsibilities, for the functioning of the Agency, attributed to the Director under Article 11, it should be considered that the Agency only became fully operational after the director's appointment and his taking up of office.

4. Noting that the Agency became fully operational after September 1996, the Commission indicates to Council that it has not been possible to establish the required report within the delay foreseen in Article 23 of the Regulation as it was not possible to obtain the necessary information, particularly prior to 1996. Furthermore, the Commission would like to establish its report taking as a basis a full 5 year period of full functioning of the Agency which will allow the Commission to assess

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 216 of 20.8.1994, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 156 of 7.7.1995, p. 1.

the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency and to propose if appropriate a review of the Regulation.

5. Moreover, for its report the Commission intends to use as basis an external evaluation launched by the Administrative board of the Agency during the year 2000. In 2001 the Commission's report accompanied, if appropriate, by the proposal foreseen in Article 23 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94 will be submitted to Council for further consideration.
6. Pending the completion of the relevant report, the Commission considers that the other institutions should be informed of the main actions and achievements during the Agency's establishment period. As the Director of the Agency has forwarded the annual general reports to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Committee, the Member States and the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work as stipulated by Art. 10 of Regulation 2062/94, the Commission now submits, as a purely interim measure, a progress report 1996-2000 summarising the main actions and achievements during the Agency's establishment period.

The progress report provides a general overview of the progress, achieved in the operational set-up of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, rather than a detailed performance evaluation towards its objectives. The precise evaluation of its performance, and the impact of the Agency's information activities, will be submitted to Council once the results of the extend evaluation launched are available and are analysed by the Commission.

## ANNEX

### **PROGRESS REPORT 1996-2000**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The decision to set up a European Agency for Safety and Health at Work was taken at the Council Summit in October 1993 with the Agency regulation being adopted by Council on 18 July 1994<sup>3</sup> and subsequently amended on 29 June 1995<sup>4</sup>. The Board of the Agency held its first two meetings in October and December 1995.

The Board is made up of the key partners in occupational safety and health decision making in Europe. Fifteen members represent the governments of Member States, 15 represent the employer organisations, 15 represent the employee organisations and three members represent the European Commission. Observers from the European social partners (ETUC and UNICE) as well as the chairperson and the director of the Dublin Foundation are also represented.

Initially, until the appointment of a Director, DGV of the Commission Services was responsible for all organisational arrangements involved in the establishment of the Agency and developing its profile and activities.

The current director took up post in Bilbao on 16 September 1996.

The Agency's first annual Work Programme was adopted by the Board in November 1996 to cover actions in 1997. This programme identified four priority actions: establishment and operation of the network; pilot project for the network; political priorities of the Agency (ie. external relations with other bodies such as the Commission and Dublin Foundation); and the organisational development of the Agency.

The Agency presented its first four-year Rolling Work Programme, 1998-2001, in September 1997. The Rolling Work Programme had been prepared on the basis of a steady increase in the Agency's resources over the period to 2001 with a view to becoming fully operational in 2000.

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<sup>3</sup> OJ L 216 of 20.8.1994,p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 156 of 7.7.1995, p. 1.

The Rolling Work Programme concentrates on three main activity areas:

*Network development*

The aim is to link all existing occupational safety and health information available through information technology (IT) to the Agency's network, and to ensure that it is easily accessible to the target users. This involves building up the IT infrastructure and expertise of the Agency, especially related to the Internet, to handle the relevant information.

*Information service – communicating knowledge*

The Agency shall use both its information network and other media to fulfil its obligations to disseminate information on occupational safety and health as laid down by the Regulation. The Regulation foresees a role for the Agency in organising certain forms of information exchange such as conferences and seminars.

*Information projects – developing knowledge*

Information projects are being undertaken by the Agency in partnership with its Focal Points with assistance from Thematic Networks, through external experts concerned on a particular topic, through studies on individual subjects, or through topic centres designated to carry out a specific task for the Agency.

Subsequent *annual work programmes* have thus focused on developing the Agency's activities within four main areas:

- the information network – building the links
- information projects - developing safety and health knowledge
- information services – communicating the safety and health message
- administrative arrangements.

Progress in each of these areas is presented below.

## **2. THE AGENCY'S INFORMATION NETWORK**

### **2.1. Focal Point network**

The Agency's information network is based on a system of Focal Points. First established in 1997, it has been steadily strengthened since. Consisting of leading national health and safety organisations, they represent the Agency at Member State level and manage national networks of information providers in partnership with representatives of the Agency's key stakeholders – workers' and employers' representatives, and governmental bodies. The number of network members at national level has been increasing steadily to a total of 365 by the end of 1999.

Focal Point representatives and observers from the European social partners meet regularly in Bilbao and have contributed significantly to the formulation of the Agency's work programmes and in their implementation by providing data and information.

## **2.2. Thematic Network Groups**

In 1997 and 1998, the Agency set up four Thematic Network Groups responsible for providing guidance on the delivery of specific aspects of its work programme. They are made up of leading experts from the 15 Member States, appointed by the Focal Points, and also include observers from the social partners. The four groups cover the main areas of Agency activity: OSH-monitoring; OSH-systems and programmes; research on work and health; and good safety and health practice. At regular meetings and via email exchanges the Thematic Network Groups assist the Agency in reviewing progress and planning future developments. Two other expert groups were also set up to assist the Agency in the development of its Internet and communications activities in 1997 and 1998 respectively.

## **2.3. Topic Centres**

In November 1998 the Agency's Administrative Board approved the setting up of four Topic Centres following a competitive tender procedure. Linking together different national safety and health expert institutions, Topic Centres are set up and contracted for fixed periods to carry out specific tasks within the Agency's information activities. They focus on gathering occupational safety and health information and making it available and accessible via the internet. One Centre is dealing with the broad topic of Research on Work and Health, while three other Centres are covering aspects of Good Safety and Health Practice (musculoskeletal disorders; stress at work; and dangerous substances). Initially set up for a period of 12 months, the Administrative Board, after an evaluation of their first year's activities, decided in November 1999 to extend their contracts for an additional year.

## **2.4. External relations**

Since becoming operational, the Agency has worked closely with the various presidencies of the European Union, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions as well as with a number of other European Agencies. As importantly, it has developed constructive relationships with various services of the European Commission.

In addition, the Agency has developed effective links with EFTA-Countries and formulated its strategy with regard to the EU Candidate Countries. Further afield, network contacts with occupational safety and health organisations in North and South America, in Asia and the far East have also been developed. For instance, the Agency's newsletter is translated into Japanese. Institutional links with the WHO and ILO have ensured that relevant information from these organisations is available via the Agency's web site.

### **3. DEVELOPING SAFETY AND HEALTH INFORMATION\***

#### **3.1. Information reports**

The Agency's first information reports were published in 1998 and tackled two important OSH issues identified in the Agency's founding regulation:

- Priorities and Strategies in Occupational Safety and Health in the Member States of the European Union;
- Economic Impact of Occupational Safety and Health in the Member States of the European Union.

By the beginning of 2000 the Agency has initiated a number of other project activities and has published reports on "Work-related Neck and Upper Limb Musculoskeletal Disorders", "Repetitive Strain Injuries in the Member States of the EU – Results of an information request".

#### **3.2. Topic Centres**

Since 1998, the Agency's Thematic Network Groups and Focal Points have been overseeing the work of project staff, Topic Centres and external consultants working on four main information projects: OSH-Monitoring; OSH-Systems and Programmes; Research on Work and Health; and Good Safety and Health Practice.

The activities of the Agency's Topic Centres include:

- preparation of a report "Research on Work-related Stress";
- seminar and Report "Future OSH Research Needs and Priorities";
- pilot report "Changing World of work";
- guidelines on data collection of Good Practice information, evaluation and presentation on Internet;
- status Reports on "Stress at Work", "Dangerous Substances", "Musculoskeletal Disorders".

The main outputs of all four Topic Centres focus on the presentation of structured information on the Internet about "Research Work and Health", "Good Practice - Stress at Work", "Good Practice – Musculoskeletal Disorders", "Good Practice - Dangerous Substances".

Forthcoming publications in 2000 will cover issues including research priorities in OSH, the state of OSH in the European Union, OSH-campaigning, safety and health and employability, and OSH in procurement and marketing.

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\* See list of Agency publications.

However, the principal vehicle for dissemination of information has been the Agency's web site.

#### **4. COMMUNICATING THE SAFETY AND HEALTH MESSAGE**

##### **4.1. Agency web site**

First launched as an experimental site in 1997, the Agency's web site has since undergone considerable development and was the focus of a Europe-wide launch campaign in the last three months of 1999 with the slogan "http://osha.eu.int - your link to safety and health at work".

The site, which in fact brings together the Agency's own site and some 15 national sites managed by the Focal Points, now provides a unique multinational and multi-lingual on-line resource for both OSH professionals and the interested public. As well as providing an overview of the Agency's role, activities and publications, a new navigational structure allows visitors to link directly to European and national-level information. European legislation is covered in all official Community languages and additional content is being added on an almost daily basis. The aim is to provide access to an encyclopaedic stock of information on occupational safety and health.

The Agency has also increased the role of the internet and other channels of electronic communication in the day-to-day management of its activities. The Agency and its Topic Centres have worked closely with the Agency's Internet consultants in the development of new applications for publishing different types of information on-line, and plans are now well advanced for the introduction of Extranet services for the Agency's Board and network partners in 2000. The internet network is also set to reach beyond the European Union with the involvement of the USA, candidate countries, and EFTA countries in the web network.

According to web-statistics, the number of hits on the Agency's web-system has increased strongly since the launch campaign and by February 2000 the total number of hits was more than 25,500 per day.

##### **4.2. Raising awareness amongst OSH professionals**

The Agency has, in co-operation with the Presidency's of the EU organised three major annual conferences in Bilbao.

- Good Safety and Health is Good Business (1997)
- The Changing World of Work (1998)
- Occupational Safety and Health and Employability (1999).

Conference proceedings for all three of these conferences have been published by the Agency both on paper and online.



In addition, the Agency has taken some additional steps to help establish its profile amongst the professional OSH community. These have included a video-presentation of the Agency's role; the issuing of a number of targeted news releases as well as making sure that the Agency is represented at Europe's major OSH conferences and exhibitions. For example, the Agency's exhibition stand at the 1999 *A+A International Safety and Health Fair and Congress* in Düsseldorf, Germany, generated a good deal of interest amongst the 50,000 visitors, as did a special Agency workshop, jointly organised with the German Focal Point, at the same event.

#### **4.3. Twin-track approach to publishing**

The Agency's publishing policy is based on a twin-track approach, integrating traditional print and electronic versions.

The Agency published the first issue of its newsletter in February 1998 and launched its new magazine, with a special issue focused on cost benefit analysis in OSH, in 1999. Also in 1999, it published the first in a series of research information reports and introduced a new range of 'fact sheets', in 11 languages, dealing with specific Agency activities. So far fact sheets have been published on:

- the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work;
- the Agency's web site;
- work-related musculoskeletal disorders in Europe;
- preventing musculoskeletal disorders;
- work-related neck and upper limb disorders – summary of an Agency report.

#### **4.4. Media and public relations**

Since its start-up, the Agency has had to respond to a growing number of requests for information from journalists, the OSH community, enterprises and the public. In addition, it has also taken a proactive role, in co-operation with its network of national editors, in developing its media relations, issuing news releases and organising press conferences during the year, as well promoting the Conferences in Bilbao.

#### **4.5. European Campaigns - reaching out to a wider public**

The Agency has welcomed the European Commission's decision to hand over to it the responsibility for planning and organising the next European Week on Occupational Safety and Health scheduled for October 2000. It provides the Agency and its network with an excellent opportunity to take the OSH message to an even wider audience. Planning for the Week started in 1999 with the Administrative Board deciding to focus in 2000 on the prevention of work-related musculoskeletal disorders, particularly back pain. The slogan for the week is "Turn your back on musculoskeletal disorders". Posters, folders and Fact Sheets are being produced in all Community languages and distributed EU-wide.

## **5. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

### **5.1. Conformance with EU-rules**

In each of these areas, the Agency has put in place the basic legal and administrative structures in order to conform to the financial, staff and other rules governing the European Institutions.

### **5.2. Finance and accounts**

The budget devoted so the Agency has developed as shown in table 1.

As regards finance and accounts the following important steps have been taken:

- adoption of financial rules implementing the Agency's financial regulation;
- organisation of the accounts and budget monitoring systems;
- installation and implementation of SI2 (budgetary accounts system);
- setting up an inventory of all Agency goods and equipment.

### **5.3. Personnel**

Adequate staff resources have been recruited (12 nationalities) and in addition a proper staff administration has been set up (see table 2):

- recruitment of 23 temporary staff (A, B, C) as foreseen in the establishment plan and 9 local staff through transparent and open procedures;
- organisation of the basic structure to run the personnel issues (personnel files, medical service, training, and establishment of rights and obligations);
- adoption of personnel rules implementing the Staff regulations applying to Agency's staff members;
- setting up a Staff Committee and a Health and Safety Committee.

### **5.4. Information technologies**

The successful implementation of IT has focused on:

- setting up the local network (wiring, servers, hub, pcs, printers and their security); the data communication system and telephonic system, as well as the Agency's Web and other countries' hosted web. Implantation of DB Oracle and SI2 and ADONIS<sup>5</sup> applications;
- multimedia installation in the meeting rooms;
- development of certain Intranet and Extranet facilities.

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<sup>5</sup> Administration of Documents Normalised Information System.

## **5.5. Documentation**

Taking into account the requirements for basic administrative functionality, the Agency has given priority to the development of the following documentation systems:

- organisation of library, archives and filing system activities;
- implementation of ADONIS.

## **5.6. General Services**

The establishment of proper Agency's offices at Gran Via 33 in Bilbao was a major task in the establishment phase. Since then general services have been developed including:

- organisation of the Agency logistics (Drawing up and monitoring of about 50 services contracts);
- organisations of tenders to cover the Agency's needs for the supply of works and services (both in the general administration and for implementing the Agency's work programme). This has required the setting up of its own ACPC<sup>6</sup>. A general call for manifestations of interest has been published in the Official Journal in order to have an extensive list of potential contractors. The main results have been to launch and choose contractors for the following services;
- security, temporary staff selection firm, medical service, travel agency, storage house, cleaning, building maintenance, IT and burotics licences and maintenance, switchboard services, insurance.

## **5.7. Management**

The Agency is developing its management concept with focus on:

- project management and team work;
- management based on values;
- service and quality;
- unit contract system and project sheets;
- staff appraisal and development schemes.

## **5.8. Evaluation**

According to a Board decision following a request by the European Commission, the Agency has launched an external evaluation of performance measured against the Agency Regulation and work programmes. Complementary to this evaluation, a survey of more forward-looking elements will be organised as well allowing for a review of its communication strategy.

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<sup>6</sup> Advisory Committee on Procurement and Contracts.

**Table 1****AGENCY BUDGET 1996-1999**

Title	1996 (euro)	1997 (euro)	1998 (euro)	1999 <sup>7</sup> (euro)	2000 (euro)
I. Staff	927 000	1 800 000	2 110 000	2 600 000	2.785.000
II. Buildings and equipment	1 139 000	1 000 000	800 000	980 202	935.202
III. Operating expenditure	970 000	1 410 000	300 000	4 045 025	3.100.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3 036 000</b>	<b>4 210 000</b>	<b>5 910 000</b>	<b>7 625 227</b>	<b>6.820.202</b>

**Table 2****STAFF 1996 to 2000<sup>8</sup>**

Category	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Temporary agents	1	4	15 (9A, 6B)	22 (10A, 8B, 4C)	23 (11A, 8B, 4C)
Auxiliary agents	2	2	1 (A)	0	1 (B)
National experts on secondment	2	4	0	1	1
Local staff agents	2	5	8	9	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>

<sup>7</sup> Including 900.000 Euro for the European Week carried over to 2000.

<sup>8</sup> 1996-1999: Situation end of December, 2000: Situation end of March.

## LIST OF AGENCY PUBLICATIONS 1997-2000

**Annual Report 96** (including a summary of Work Programme 1997)  
(EN/FR/DE/ES) Cat. No. AS-05-97-656(EN-ES-FR-DE)-C

**Annual Report 97** (including the four-year rolling Work Programme 1998-2001 and a summary of Work Programme 1998)  
(EN/FR/DE/ES) Cat. N° AS-15-98-003-(ES-DE-EN-FR)-C

**Annual Report 98** (including a summary of Work Programme 1999)  
(EN/FR/DE/ES) Cat. N° AS-22-99-434(EN-DE-FR-ES)-C

### **European Agency Newsletter**

NEWS 1 - EN/FR/DE/ES - Cat. No. AS-AA-98-001(EN-ES-FR-DE)-C.

NEWS 2 - EN/FR/DE/ES - Cat. No. AS-AA-98-002(EN-ES-FR-DE)-C.

NEWS 3 - EN/FR/DE/ES - Cat. No. AS-AA-98-003(EN-ES-FR-DE)-C.

NEWS 4 - EN/FR/DE/ES - Cat. No. AS-AA-99-004(EN-ES-FR-DE)-C.

**“Economic Impact of Occupational Safety and Health in the Member States of the European Union” report**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/SV//NL/FI/EL) - Cat- N° AS-11-97-689-(ES-DE-EL-EN-FR-IT-NL-PT-FI-SV)-C

**"Priorities and Strategies in occupational safety and health Policy in the Member States of the European Union" report**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/IT/NL/EL) - CAT.N°AS-09-97-470-(ES-DE-EL-EN-FR-IT-NL-PT)-C

**“Work-Related Neck and Upper Limb Musculoskeletal Disorders” report**  
(EN) - Cat. N° AS-24-99-712-EN-C

**"Repetitive Strain Injuries in the Member States of the European Union: The results of an information request" report**  
(EN) - Cat. N° AS-24-99-704-EN-C

**European Agency Brochure – “Building the Links“**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT)

**Agency Facts – General Information**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL)

**Agency Facts – User’s guide to the European Agency’s website**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL)

**Agency Facts - Work related musculoskeletal disorders in Europe**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL)

**Agency Facts - Preventing Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL)

**Agency Facts - Work-related neck and upper limb musculoskeletal disorders: summary of Agency report**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL)

**European Agency Magazine 1 - A question of costs and benefits?**  
(EN/FR/DE/ES) - Cat. N°AS-25-99-617-(EN-FR-DE-ES)-C

**Good Safety and Health – Good Business for Europe – Conference Proceedings -**  
Conference held on 15 September 1997 – Original Languages with full English text

**The Changing World of Work - Conference proceedings**  
Conference held on 19/21 October 1998 - Original Languages with full English text  
Cat. N° AS-23-99-580-EN-C

**"Safety and Health and Employability" - Conference proceedings**  
Conference held on 27/29 September 1999 - Original Languages with full English text  
Cat-N° TE-27-00-823-EN-C

**\*"Turn your back on musculoskeletal disorders"** - General Information including folder, postcard, posters (EN/FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL) for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work - October 2000

**"Your link to Safety and Health at Work"** - Video about the Agency with special focus on its website. Running time: 8 min. Original language version EN, dubbed into FR/DE/ES/PT/DA/IT/NL/SV/FI/EL.

Besides the video different **PR products** were produced in all official languages including posters, mouse-pads, folders, post-its, pens and tablecloths. These products were used during a special launch campaign of the Agency's website in all Member States from September to December 1999.