

MINUTES

Meeting:	EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD
Date:	Tuesday 12 May 2020 (13h00-16h00)

The main objectives of this extraordinary Executive Board meeting were to update the EB on the situation in the Agency as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and to discuss the organisation of the Management Board meeting in June.

0. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda proposed for this meeting was adopted with no Any Other Business items. Before starting to work through the items, the Chair asked EB members to declare whether they may have a conflict of interests with any of the items of the Agenda. No EB member declared any.

1. UPDATE ON EU-OSHA'S SITUATION FOLLOWING COVID-19

Further to an invitation by the Chair, the Commission outlined the main initiatives that the Commission in general and DG EMPL in particular have taken as a result of the COVID-19. The Commission recalled the "short-work scheme" whose main aim is to prevent workers from falling into a situation of unemployment and the resort to economic flexibility. Within DG EMPL, the "Youth Guarantee" programme is in the pipeline and other important initiatives are on the way, also as part of the social pillar action plan. The revision of the chemicals agents directive continues to be a priority for DG EMPL at the moment. Significant work on the update of the biological agents directive is foreseen, with the outbreak of COVID-19 providing a fierce push. The Commission also acknowledged the close cooperation with the Agency and the Advisory Committee on Health and Safety at Work with regard to the delivery of a set of guidelines on return to the workplace after the health emergency generated by COVID-19. These are proving to be a valuable instrument to orientate workplaces in Europe on how to implement the principles of the framework directive in the current situation.

The Agency presented to the Executive Board its response to the COVID-19 crisis by outlining the measures adopted to ensure business continuity as well as the operational actions taken to respond to an increased demand on OSH information. EU-OSHA had shared a document with the EB prior to the meeting. EU-OSHA has been fully operational since the beginning of the crisis. Both telework measures and return to the workplace protocols are being discussed with staff representatives, both within the Staff Committee and the Health and Safety Committee. From the operational side, actions included the early publication of an OSHwiki article and the delivery of the mentioned guidelines, but also a set of communication actions focussed on raising awareness and providing practical guidance and resources about the impact of teleworking on the safety and health of workers, particularly musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The Agency will also run a survey among the focal points to collect information from the national level on inspection activities; awareness raising and advisory actions; impact on occupational health services and strategy (any reorientation for OSH at national level: priorities, resourcing, relation with public health) and research. Social partner initiatives are also covered.

The Executive Director also informed the EB about the exchange that she had the week before the EB meeting with the EMPL Committee of the European Parliament in relation to the topic. Eurofound was

invited to that exchange too. There was much interest in and appreciation of the work done by EU-OSHA amongst the MEPs attending the session. She also stressed the importance of cooperation amongst Agencies within the EMPL area. In reply to a concern expressed by the Workers in relation to a publication issued by CEDEFOP dealing with health risks for different sectors and occupations, the Executive Director remarked that EU-OSHA had not been involved and that this issue will be clarified with CEDEFOP to ensure that EU-OSHA expertise is used in any future similar situation. Finally, the Executive Director reminded that EU-OSHA is running a stakeholders' survey and that this is an important exercise to make sure that the Agency keeps good connection with the needs of its stakeholders to ensure relevance and usefulness of its work.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The EB congratulated the Agency on the good work done – both in relation to the quality and the timeliness in which it has been made available.

Workers asked for a readjustment of FAST in the light of COVID-19 and also a reflection of the COVID-19 situation in the new HWC. This does not necessarily mean a change in the next campaign topic. The Agency should consider a mini-campaign to address COVID-19. Ongoing work could be pooled together and communicated in such a way as to refer directly to the COVID-19 emergency (work on digitalisation; distance working; guidelines on return to work; possibly OiRA).

The workers also welcomed the new ESENER data, which are very relevant, particularly regarding psychosocial risks.

EU-OSHA offered assurance that these concerns are already being addressed. The agency has given the possibility to FOPs to re-orientate part or the totality of their 2020 FAST awareness raising activities to COVID-19 related actions and to take the activities online. In addition, the Agency is communicating all relevant work under the slogan “Healthy Workplaces stop the pandemic” and this action will be rolled into the new campaign when it is launched in October.

Employers remarked that measures do not always follow from a risk assessment, as in the current situation certain measures are mandatory. There are also challenges at the moment for OSH from a strategic perspective – how to ensure that OSH remains relevant in a context where COVID-19 is tackled mainly as a public health emergency. They stressed the importance of reflecting on how the OSH community can find its strategic place with the current agenda. The campaign topic should not be changed at this stage.

This item was for information and discussion.

2. OUTLINE OF THE JUNE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

EU-OSHA had shared with the EB a proposed outline for the EB/MB meetings in June and the Executive Director presented it at the meeting.

There was agreement within the EB to try to reshuffle the MB/EB meetings agendas so as to ensure that these can be carried out over three days instead of the 5 days foreseen. The proposal would be as follows:

- 1 day - EB meeting, followed by MB plenary to introduce the items
- 2 day – Interest groups meetings
- 3 day – EB wrap up meeting and MB plenary to conclude on the items

EU-OSHA will work around that and will inform the MB accordingly.

The meetings will be held virtually. After having checked the options available, providing interpretation into 5 languages (EN, FR, DE, IT and ES) does not seem feasible at the moment, but the Agency will continue exploring the issue. The suggestion would be to hold the meetings in English and – for the plenaries – MB members could put forward their questions in their language for which interpretation is normally provided and EU-OSHA staff will help to follow-up on those questions. This proposal is also to be read in a context where other Agencies have either followed the same approach; or have decided to postpone their MB meetings to later in the year in the hope of being able to organise a physical meeting – this is the case for the other tripartite agencies, Cedefop and Eurofound.

The Agency will look into an IT solution in use at the institutions, which allows for simultaneous interpretation of up to 6 languages (“Interactio”) but there are some procurement constraints and the technical consequences have to be analysed. Interest groups meetings can be organised by the Agency but if the groups prefer to organise them themselves via their own platforms this is also possible. The final outcome will also be communicated to the EB and MB shortly.

Regarding the content of the agenda, EU-OSHA had shared a draft with the EB. The Executive Director reminded the EB that the objective of the meeting in June is to respond to some important regulatory requirements on the part of the MB. In particular, the MB is expected to adopt an analysis and assessment of the Agency’s Consolidated Annual Activity Report for 2019, which is a key document for the discharge procedure by the Parliament and Council. Furthermore, the MB will have to adopt an opinion on the Agency’s accounts for 2019. Another important issue will be to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the work programme for 2020 – which EU-OSHA is assessing at the moment. Considering that the ESENER data visualisation tool should be delivered at the end of May, the Agency is also proposing a presentation of the tool to the MB at the meeting. The proposal was welcomed and accepted by the EB. Finally, the Agency informed that work is on-going on three implementing rules for the Staff Regulations which will be presented to the MB for adoption in June. The Chairperson reminded the Agency about the importance of sending the documentation within the timeframe agreed in the rules of procedure to help the MB prepare with adequate time for the meeting. The Workers also asked to make the documents available to the MB as they are ready – so if there is documentation available ahead of the 14 days deadline, this can be sent in advance.

CONCLUSIONS: Having taken note of the EB’s feedback and following a reflection thereon, EU-OSHA will communicate the final meeting arrangements and agenda to the EB and MB shortly.
--

This item was for feedback.

3. IAS CHARTER

The ED informed the EB about the revised charter that the IAS is submitting for the ED and MB Chair’s signature. The main purpose of the revision is to align the charter to the provisions in the new financial regulation. In addition, the ED updated the EB about planned interviews between the IAS and representatives from the three groups and the Commission with the objective of giving an input to the next multi-annual strategic audit plan for the Agency.

The Governments asked clarification on the timeline and the form in which such interviews will be held. The Agency will contact the IAS and will follow-up with this request and inform interviewees accordingly.

This item was for information and comments.

---O---

The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

ANNEX – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name Surname	Category
Jesús ALVAREZ	Commission
Stefan OLSSON	Commission
Charlotte GREVFORS ERNOULT	Commission
Teresa MOITINHO	Commission
Christa SCHWENG	Employers
Jessie FERNANDES	Employers
Kris DE MEESTER	Employers
Georgi STOEV	Employers
Eckhard METZE	Employers
Francois ENGELS	Employers
Renārs LŪSIS	Government
Boel CALLERMO	Government
Carlos PEREIRA	Government
Julia NEDJELIK-LISCHKA	Workers
Ignacio DORESTE	Workers
Károly GYÖRGY	Workers
Christa SEDLATSCHKE	EU-OSHA
Andrea BALDAN	EU-OSHA
Jesper BEJER	EU-OSHA
William COCKBURN	EU-OSHA
Ilaria PICCIOLI	EU-OSHA
Brenda O'BRIEN	EU-OSHA
Andrew SMITH	EU-OSHA
Alban GUILLERM	EU-OSHA