



Seat of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work Bilbao, España.

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REPORT

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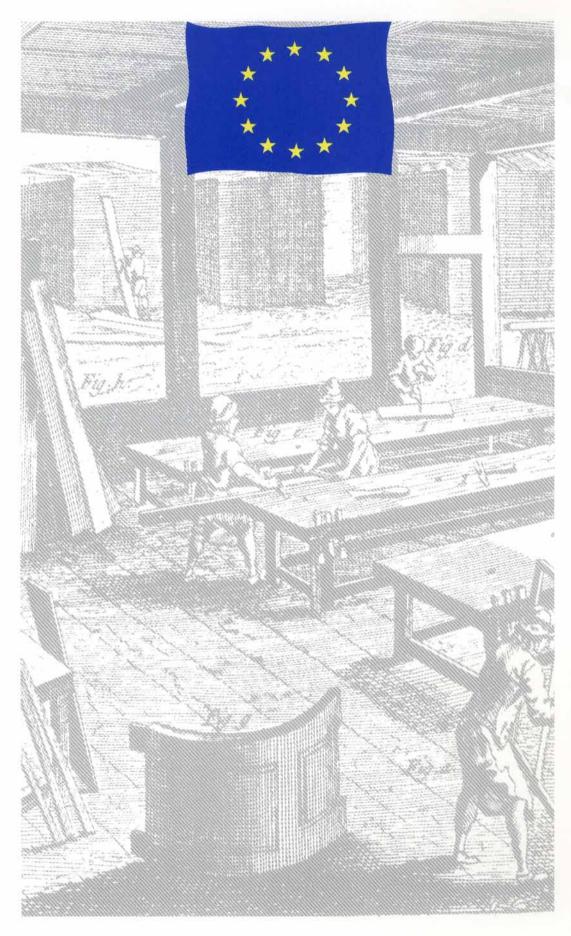




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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD, M. PAUL WEBER

Paul Weber

Chairman of the Administrative Board

I am very pleased to be able to introduce the first Annual Report of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work which, after a long period of gestation, is now in a position to report on some significant activities, and to describe its plans for the challenging period ahead.

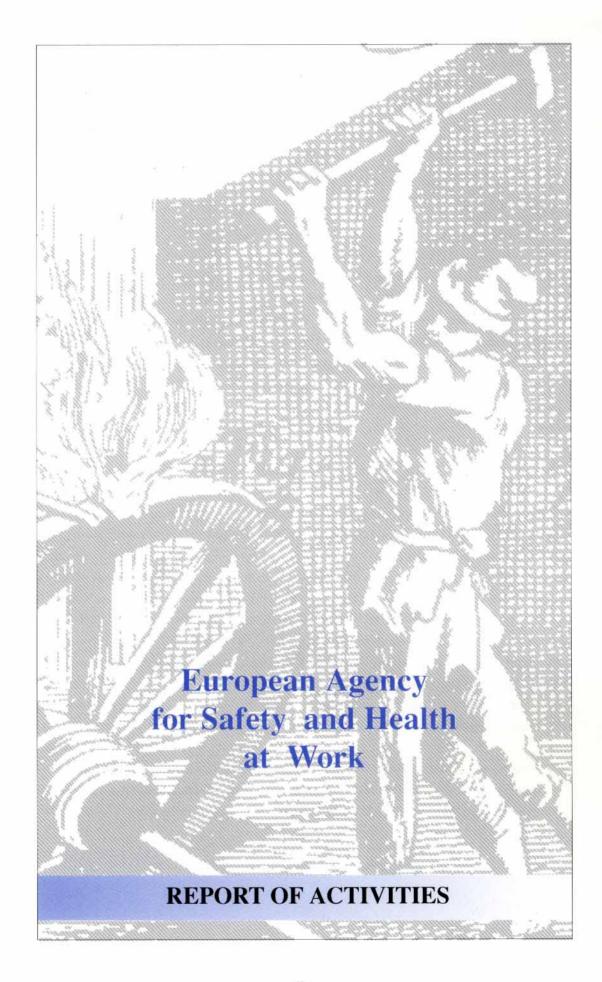
I believe that the beginning of the Agency's work launches a new phase in the development of safety and health awareness in the EU. The EU has established a framework of legislation on minimum standards which should be applied in all Member States but it is widely recognised that now, there is a need to ensure that these standards are consistently applied at a practical level, in the workplace. It is essential that information is available about hazards, risks and preventive measures to deal with them, and that knowledge, experience and solutions to common problems are shared at the European level.

It is clearly, therefore, the Agency's main task to establish the information network on safety and health at work, as envisaged in our Regulation. The Agency has decided to base its information network on the Internet and the World Wide Web. In the coming years it should be able to make a real contribution to the promotion of higher standards of health and safety in Europe by developing the quality and accessibility of information through its network.

At this early stage it was especially important that we should find a suitable office for the Agency for the next four to five years until a permanent home is identified. I and the Board were very pleased that a suitable office was obtained at Gran Via 33. I would like to express our gratitude to the City of Bilbao, to the Basque Government, the Provincial Council of Biscay (Diputación Foral de Bizkaia) and the Spanish Government in Madrid for the support they have given either by helping to meet the rental costs of the building, or in any other way.

This report sets out not only the activities of the Agency in 1996, which were necessarily somewhat limited, but also describes our plans for our work in 1997 and onwards. I am encouraged by the positive start that has been made and look forward keenly to the future.







THE SITUATION AT THE END OF 1995

1.1

The Decision to set up an Agency for Safety and Health at Work was taken at a Council Summit in October 1993. The Spanish Government selected Bilbao for the seat of the Agency. The Regulation (2062/94) establishing the Agency was adopted by Council on 18 July 1994. It then became necessary to amend the Regulation to take account of the entry into the EU of three new Member States (Finland, Austria and Sweden), and at this point also the membership of the Agency's Administrative Board was amended to include a representative of both employers and employees from each Member State. The amending Regulation (1643/95) was adopted by Council on 29 June 1995. The Board held its first two meetings on 25/26 October 1995 and 12/13 December 1995. Mr Tom Walsh, Government representative of Ireland, was unanimously elected as the first Chairman of the Administrative Board, and a Bureau group was set up to prepare the business of the Board meetings and deal with urgent matters between meetings.



An opening ceremony was held to celebrate the first meeting of the Administrative Board on 25/26 October. During this meeting, and the second, the Board considered first drafts of the Internal Rules of Procedure and the Internal Financial Regulation. At its October meeting it agreed the terms of the advertisement for the post of Director as provided for in the Regulations establishing the Agency. A group on Infrastructure was established, to oversee the process of finding suitable short and long-term office accommodation for the Agency in Bilbao. In December 1995 two temporary staff were engaged and funded in Luxembourg, to provide secretarial and administrative support until the end of 1996. The Commission Services represented by DG V were responsible for all the organisational arrangements involved in the establishment of the Agency and developing its profile and activities until the appointment of its Director.

1.3.

Member States were invited to notify details of the main component elements of their national health and safety at work information networks, including any institutions which in their judgement could contribute to the work of the Agency, for the network to be set up, but not all had done so by the end of the year.







2. ACTIVITIES, 1996: GENERAL OVERVIEW

2.1.

In 1996, the Board met three times, in July to appoint a Director and in March and November to progress the business of the Agency. Mr Walsh resigned as Chairman of the Board in March 1996 and was succeeded by Mr Paul Weber, the Government representative from Luxembourg. Following the Director's appointment in September, temporary staff were engaged in Bilbao to commence the work of the Agency in setting up its administrative and financial systems, acquiring suitable offices and developing detailed work programmes necessary to establish the information network described in the Regulation.

3 ESTABLISHMENT OF RULES OF PROCEDURE AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

3.1.

In March 1996 the Board approved its draft rules of procedure for formal submission to the Council and Commission for their approval. These rules are required by Article 8.8 of Regulation 2062/94 and govern the way in which the business of the Administrative Board and Bureau should be conducted. At its November meeting the Board agreed a revised version of the Rules which took account of the Commission's comments. In November, the Board also gave final approval to the Agency's Financial Regulations, taking on comments which had been made by the Commission and the European Court of Auditors.



APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR

4.1.

An advertisement for the post of Director of the Agency was published in the Official Journal of the EC and (in a shortened version) in appropriate newspapers and journals in Member States and in Community institutions, with a closing date of 31 January 1996. More than 800 applications were received. A preselection was carried out by the European Commission (DG VF) on the basis of criteria agreed by the Commission and the Administrative Board.



4.2.

At the end of the preselection process, six candidates were proposed for consideration by the Board. The Board met in Bilbao on 3 July 1996 to make the appointment. Each candidate was invited to make a fifteen-minute presentation, and at the conclusion of the presentations the Board decided to appoint Mr Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, Deputy Director of the Danish Working Environment Service, as the Agency's first Director. Mr Konkolewsky took up post in Bilbao on 15 September 1996.



INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1.

During 1995 and 1996 the infrastructure group advised the Board on the possibilities for accommodation for the Agency and set out criteria for short, medium and long term options. During the plenary meeting in March 1996 an inauguration took place of the temporary, shortterm premises for the Agency's offices provided by the Basque Government at 61 Alameda de Mazarredo in Bilbao. This was attended by Mr. Ramón Jaúregui Atondo, Regional Minister for Justice, Economy, Labour and Social Security. It was clear, however, that these premises were too small to be adequate when more staff were engaged to begin the Agency's work. The Board's group on infrastructure, chaired from July 1996 by Mr. Florencio Muñoz Mugica, therefore examined the options for an office which would be suitable for the medium term (four to five years), whilst the Agency started and consolidated its functions, pending a later decision on a permanent location. The group visited a number of possible sites and concluded that the building which best met their criteria of being spacious, well-equipped and located close to transport and other services in Bilbao, was the office at Gran Via 33. The Basque Government and the Provincial Council of Biscay undertook to provide funding to contribute to the rental costs of the building.

5.2.

The Board approved the choice of Gran Via 33 at its November meeting.





WORK PROGRAMME

6.1

During the year the Board completed discussions on the Agency's first annual Work Programme, and adopted the final version at its November 1996 meeting. This document would be the basis for action in 1997. The Work programme:

- sets out the background to the foundation of the Agency the need for continuing efforts to tackle the economic and social cost of accidents and ill-health arising from work activities in the EU, the legislative framework on safety and health established by the EC in recent years, and the current need for high quality information on risks and preventive measures, to make the legislation effective at a practical level;
- describes the tasks of the Agency as set out in Regulation 2062/94;
- notes the need for the Agency to develop principles of accuracy, objectivity and accessibility of information distributed by the Agency;
- acknowledges the context of the year's work, in that the director would not be in post until later in the year, and that his first priority tasks would largely be logistical ones, for example the recruitment of staff and agreement of their contracts, establishing financial management systems and arranging suitable accommodation for the Agency

6.2

The Work Programme, which was susceptible to a revision after the Director was appointed, goes on to say that, in the period 1996/97, and subject to the recruitment of staff, the Agency should focus on three areas of work:

- the establishment and operation of an international information Network;
- the political priorities of the Agency;
- a pilot project for the Network.

The main elements of these were:

International Information Network



6.3

The Agency should set up a network composed of the principal component elements of Member States' national information networks, national focal points, future topic centres and international contact points. Member States were obliged to notify their focal points to the Agency, which would then discuss with them the needs of the information users, and how the collaboration between the focal points and the Agency should be structured in order to meet these needs. It would also be an early priority to identify other institutions which could contribute to the work of the Agency through the network, including international organisations and third countries outside the EU. The established network should aim to make all available information on safety and health at work accessible as quickly as possible.



Political priorities of the Agency

The Agency should produce an analysis of its role in providing Community bodies, Member States and those involved in the field of health and safety, in relation to other institutions at European level with an interest in this area. This should explain how the Agency would cooperate with these other institutions, explaining where its responsibilities lie, and how it would provide a service to meet them.

Pilot Project for the Network

6.5

The Agency should set up a pilot project to collect information on a specific health and safety topic, in order to build up a model for the dissemination of information to be carried out by the Agency's network.





ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

7.1

Although the Agency was not able to undertake the full range of activities envisaged in the Regulation, because of its lack of staff and infrastructure for most of 1996, some initiatives were undertaken on the Agency's behalf by staff of the European Commission before September, and, after his appointment, by the Director and his staff. A summary of these activities is as follows:

7.2

Internal Activities

- in September a week-long workshop was held to establish the Agency's strategic priorities, to consider relations with other institutions, particularly the European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions, and to draw up a draft internal work programme;
- a number of staff were recruited initially on a secondment basis from health and safety authorities in certain Member States, the generosity of these authorities making it possible for the Agency to begin work quickly;
- A Budget, Staff Plan, Organisational structure (see Annex 2), and Work programme for 1997 was developed, and an outline budget and work programme for 1998;
- an Internal Activity Plan for 1996/97 was developed and presented to the Board (see Annex 3);
- preparation was undertaken for meetings of the Bureau, Board and National Focal Points for early 1997;
- the new office at Gran Via 33 was equipped and logistic systems established;
- auxiliary contracts for the relevant staff were prepared.

7.3

External Activities

Stand at the XIV World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health, Madrid, 22-26 April 1996



The Agency shared a stand at Madrid with the European Commission DG VF 'Public Health and Safety at Work' Directorate. The stand presented the aims and objectives of the Agency and a publicity leaflet on the Agency was made available. More than 3000 people visited the stand.

Stand at the 25th International Congress on Occupational Health, Stockholm, 15-20 September 1996

The Agency was represented at the Congress on a joint stand with the European Commission DG VF. The Congress attracted over 20,000 visitors, many of them specialists in the field of occupational health. The Commission gave a keynote presentation on the Social Dimension in the 21st century.

7.4

Presentations by the Director

Among a considerable number of presentations made by Mr Konkolewsky in the period between his appointment and the end of the year, there were the following:

- Conference on 'The Application of the Law of Prevention of Workplace Risks', Zaragoza, October 1996
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin;
 Conference on 'Monitoring the Working Environment' October 1996
- III National Session of Occupational Health in Bilbao, November 1996
- Sociedad Castellana de Medicina y Seguridad del Trabajo, Madrid, November 1996
- 3rd International Conference on Information Technologies in Occupational Safety and Health Information, Training and Education, Brussels, November 1996
- Presentation to the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work, Dublin, November 1996
- Presentation to a group of Members of the European Parliament in Bilbao (November 1996); Mr. José María Gil - Robles Gil - Delgado, Mr. Peter Skinner, Mr. Jesús Cabezón Alonso, Ms. Marie-Thérèse Hermange, Mr. Josu Jon Imaz San Miguel, Ms. Barbara Weiler, Mr. Friedrich Wolf.







FINANCIAL REPORT

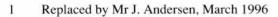
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The Agency's budget for 1996 was approved by the Board in 1995 at an overall total of 4 mecu. 3 mecu was made available to the Agency by the Commission for 1996. By the end of the year, in total, about 2.2 mecu were used by the Agency. Under Staffing, the Agency spent substantially below the amount available (around 30 %), as staff recruitment first began after the Director took office in September, but on Infrastructure and Operating Costs, the budgets were almost completely used (over 90 %).



Governments

Member		Alternate
Mr R. Finding	Austria	Mr G. Poinstingl
Mr M. Heselmans	Belgium	Mr J. M. Lamotte
Mr E. Andersen	Denmark [†]	Mr N. O. Andersen
Mr M. Hurmalainen	Finland	Mr J. Kallio
Mr M. Boisnel	France	Mrs J. Guigen
Mr R. Opfermann	Germany	Mr N. Fuhrmann
Mrs A. Kafetzopoulou	Greece	Mrs M. Pissimissi
Mr T. Walsh	Ireland	Dr S. Wood
(Chairman, October 1995-March Mr G. Branca	1996) Italy ²	Prof. M. Biagi
Mr P. Weber	Luxembourg	Ms M. Fisch
Chairman Mr R. Laterveer	Netherlands	Mr H. Schrama
Mr A. Durao	Portugal	Mr L. Silva Santos
Mr J. Gomez-Hortiguela	Spain	Mr J. Chozas Pedrero
Mr B. Bylund	Sweden	Mr B. Barrefelt
Dr J. McQuaid ³	United Kingdom	Mr P. Tansley ⁴



- 2 Replaced by Mr L. Alberti, March 1996
- 3 Replaced by Ms J. Durning, March 1996, who was replaced by Mr R. Clifton, July 1996
- 4 Replaced by Ms G. Deakins, March 1996



ANNEX 1

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD



Employers

Member		Alternate
Ms C. Schweng	Austria	Mr H. Brauner
Mr H. De Lange	Belgium	Mr A. Pelegrin
Mr T. Nielsen	Denmark	Mr T. Jepsen
Mr J. Ahtela	Finland	Mr Lindahl
Mr J. Tassin	France	Mrs V. Corman ⁵
Mr K. Kreizberg	Germany	Mr J. Janiszewski ⁶
Mr E. Zimalis	Greece	Mr E. Tsamousopoulos
Mr T. Briscoe	Ireland	Mr T. Lawlor
Mr F. Giusti	Italy	Mr M. Fregoso
Mr M. Sauber	Luxembourg	Dr F. Metzler
Ms I. De Meester	Netherlands	Mr P. Van Ostaijn
Mr J. Costa Tavares	Portugal	Mr J. Salgado Barroso
Mr F. Muñoz Múgica	Spain	Mr F. Manzano Sanz
Mr H. Frostling	Sweden	Mr A. Lind
Dr J. Asherson Vice-Chairman	United Kingdom	Mr P. Hughes

- 5 Replaced by Mr. J.-C. Aubrun, November 1996
- 6 Replaced by Mr K.-C. Scheel, November 1996



Workers

Member		Alternate
Ms S. Leodolter ⁷	Austria	Mr A. Heider
Mr H. Fonck	Belgium	Ms C. Cypres
Mr I. Maltesen	Denmark	Mr J. Poulsen
Mr J. Metsamäki	Finland	Ms R. Tvöläjärvi
Mr M. Sedes	France	Mr M. Martin
Mr R. Konstanty	Germany	Mr M. Angermeier
Mr D. Politis	Greece	Mr S. Drivas
Mr T. Wall	Ireland	Mr S. Cronin
Ms G. Galli	Italy	Ms L. Benedettini
Mr A. Giardin	Luxembourg	Mr F. Miller
Mr M. Wilders Vice-Chairman	Netherlands	Mr G. Cremers
Mr M. Ferreiro Saramago	Portugal	Mr A. Gomez Tavares
Mr A. Carcoba	Spain	Mr T. López Arias
Mr B. Tengberg	Sweden	Ms M. Breidensjö
Ms A. Gibson	United Kingdom	Mr T. Mellish

Resigned





European Commission

Member

Mr A. Larsson

Director General, DG V

Mr M. Oostens

DG V

Mr Ronald Haigh

DG VF

Alternate

Dr W. J. Hunter

Director, DG VF

Mr J.-P. Van Gheluwe

DG III/D/1

Mr J.-R. Biosca de Sagastuy

DG VF

Observers

Member

Mr C. Purkiss

Director, European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions

Mrs V. Corman

UNICE

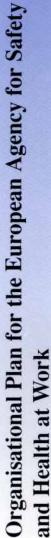
Mr E. Carlslund

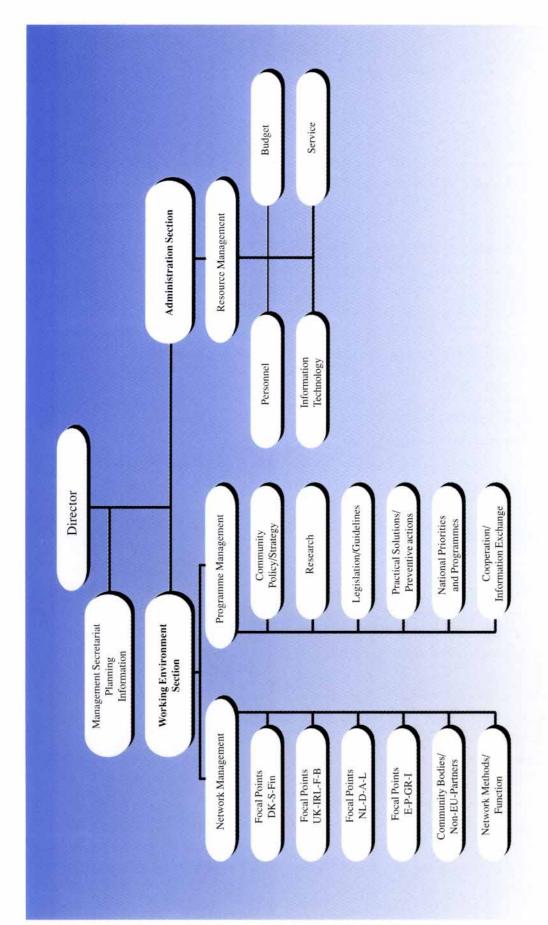
ETUC/CES

Alternate

Mr O. Richard











ANNEX 3

INTRODUCTION

1.1

The document is based on the Council Regulations establishing the Agency (2062/94 and 1643/95) and on the Annual Work Programme. The plan will cover the following items:

- Establishment and operation of the network
- Political priorities of the Agency
- Pilot project for the network
- Organisational development of the Agency

The plan also covers other activities related to Article 3 of Regulation 2062/94.

As the Agency will be in the initial phase of its development and facing a number of uncertainties over budget, staff and infrastructure, it is necessary to make a general reservation about the possibility of implementing the planned activities.

2. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE NETWORK

2.1

Network Model - Introduction

There are two concepts within the model:

Linking existing information through focal points and the national networks, using the Internet as a communication tool. The first step will be to establish links with already existing databases. The next step could be to make other types of information available. International organisations and third countries can be linked in to this network.

Creating new information through standing information networks on strategic topics, reflecting topics mentioned in Article 3 of the Regulation (e.g. national priorities and programmes, plans for research, Community action programmes). The topics could be identified through a process involving the focal points, national networks, European social partners and other Community Institutions.



2.2

The Organisational Set-up of the Network

A document will be prepared on the roles and functions of the Agency network, the focal points and the national networks, in order to clarify the minimum requirements (quality assurance system) for:

- the identification of target groups and their needs, particularly practical information for use at company level, e.g. sector oriented information, information focused on solutions to common problems;
- the different information services and products of the network, and their 'added European value';
- the quality of collection and dissemination of information;
- elements that should be part of the information network;
- the languages to be used;
- the cooperation and working relations between the Agency, the focal points and the national networks;
- open access to the information, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the scope for providing commercial information services;
- the inclusion of all relevant occupational safety and health institutions and groups within the national networks;
- the nature of the participation in the process of creating new information on strategic and specific topics.

An IT plan will be prepared to establish the technological base of the network, which will be based on Internet.

Based on the above documents, a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the network will be prepared, involving the focal points. Two pilot sites will be chosen for the development of the IT plan.







A study will be carried out to identify potential network partners both within and outside the EU and their possible contribution to the information network. This will include: (within the EU) the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Dublin Foundation, ECOSOC, CEN/CENELEC, EUROSTAT, the social partners at EU level; (outside the EU) the ILO, WHO, PAHO, CEECs and EFTA countries with Association Agreements, USA, Canada, Australia, Japan.

Principles will be formulated for *full membership* of the network where the partner implements the same arrangements as laid down for the focal points, and *associated membership* where the only connection between the Agency network and the network partner is an Internet link.

Based on this work, a plan for the implementation of arrangements with other EU and non-EU partners will be prepared, involving the network partners in question.

POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE AGENCY

A document of reflection about the political priorities of the Agency will be drafted taking into account, among other things, the actions included in the work programme of the Commission. It will be necessary from the beginning to define the basis of a relationship with the Dublin Foundation to avoid duplication in the work of the two bodies and ensure the complementarity of their activities. The directors have agreed to discuss regularly projects which their respective bodies plan to undertake, for subsequent discussion and approval by their Boards.

PILOT PROJECT FOR THE NETWORK

On the second concept mentioned in para 2.1 ('creating new information'), priority topics will be identified, involving the focal points. When a topic is identified, a special network will be formed to compile the relevant available information on the chosen subject. This network, and the Agency, will be responsible for the presentation and dissemination of the information.



5. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGENCY

The organisational development of the Agency is of particular importance in the early stages. The following are the key areas:



5.1

Infrastructure

An office for the Agency for the medium term has been found. The question of the long-term seat, preferably an independent building, should be studied in the period 1997-98. The *working environment* of the Agency should develop in such a way that it is a model workplace with high standards of safety and health. A *strategic informatics plan*, based on the needs of the Agency and its network, will be developed and implemented.

5.2

Personnel and Management

A plan for the *organisational structure* of the Agency will be prepared as soon as possible, which will reflect two broad areas of activity; first, the safety and health related activities described in the Annual Work Programme, and second, internal management and administration. The work will be organised on a project management basis to ensure maximum flexibility. To develop the Agency as a network organisation, a system will be established of contact persons with particular knowledge of the Member States and their health and safety systems.

A temporary as well as a more permanent *staff plan* must be drawn up as soon as possible, to reflect all the activities in the work programme and this plan. The draft Establishment Plan for the Agency for 1996 and 1997 needs to be adjusted in terms of the number and grades of staff to meet actual needs.

A financial management system has to be developed and established according to the Commission regulations and in conformity with the specific rules in the internal Financial Regulation of the Agency.





As part of a *personnel development scheme*, a number of activities will be introduced, including training in project management, languages (especially Spanish), and IT.

A quality management system will be implemented, which implies that, e.g.

- all correspondence and requests for information should be dealt with within a fixed time limit;
- the accessibility of the Agency e.g. by telephone, should be ensured;
- each year there will be a review, involving the customers, of the quality of the products and services delivered.

5.3.

Marketing and profile

A marketing strategy will be developed, encompassing the following activities:

- Information policy, especially liaison with the Press, and publication of a newsletter;
- Organisation of, and participation in, seminars, conferences and exhibitions;
- Development of Bilbao into a centre of knowledge in the area of occupational safety and health at work.

A *logo and graphic profile* must be designed and approved as soon as possible, to make the Agency visible and express its identity. External consultants will be used to draft proposals.

5.4

Planning System

The Agency's planning system will be based upon:

- Strategic planning the Boards Work programme;
- Operational planning the Director's plan of activities;
- Detailed plans for specific projects and activities.

An important part of the system will be periodic review of activities and results achieved by the Agency. The results will be published in the Annual Report.



OTHER ITEMS

The Agency will have to focus its activities in the first year mainly on the establishment and operation of the network and its organisational development. Nevertheless, the Agency can be involved on a small scale in other activities such as organising seminars and conferences. Furthermore, the necessary service for activities of the Administrative Board, Bureau and other groups (meetings, etc.), as well as the Commission, will be provided.





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