



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue
Social dialogue, Industrial Relations

Brussels, 19 December 2013

**SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE MEETING
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES**

**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL
29 NOVEMBER 2013**

MINUTES

Participants:

Employer representatives

Ms Miette Dechelle, UEPG, Belgium
Mr Zygmunt Borkowski, EURACOAL, Poland
Mr Philip Garner, EURACOAL, United Kingdom
Ms Gitta Hulik, EURACOAL, Belgium
Mr Brian Ricketts, EURACOAL, Belgium
Ms Marina Schneider, EURACOAL, Germany
Ms Cecilia Andersson, EUROMINES, Sweden
Ms Corinna Hebestreit, EUROMINES, Belgium
Mr Stefan Kwaśny, EUROMINES, Poland
Mr Manfred Steinhage, EUROMINES, Germany
Mr Rafał Szkop, EUROMINES, Poland
Ms Krisztina Vujkov Tomor, EUROMINES, Hungary
Mr Ákos Zoltay, EUROMINES, Hungary
Ms Claire Lanne, IMA-Europe, Belgium

Employee representatives

Mr Jean-Pierre Damm, FNEM FO, France (in the chair)
Ms Corinna Zierold, industriAll, Belgium
Mr Patrick Carragher, BACM, United Kingdom
Mr Victor José Fernandez Vazquez, FITAG-UGT, Spain
Mr Lars-Erik Folkesson, IF METALL, Sweden
Mr Krzysztof Leśniowski, NSZZ "S", Poland
Mr Dariusz Potyrała, ZZG, Poland
Mr Joël Włodarczyk, FNEM FO, France

European Commission

Mr Murad Wiśniewski, DG EMPL, Belgium

1. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted with four amendments: points 3 and 6 were deleted in the absence of a representative of DG ENV, an update on the new EU occupational health and safety strategy by DG EMPL was added instead, and Ms Miette Dechelle requested to add information on the European Minerals Forum under point 12.

2. Adoption of the minutes

The draft minutes of the last SSSC meeting of 6 September 2013 were not adopted, as Mr Victor José Fernandez Vazquez announced to table an amendment, in addition to amendments already received from Ms Corinna Zierold and Ms Claire Lanne.

3. OELs for NO₂ and NO_x

Ms Cecilia Andersson held a presentation on occupational exposure limits to NO₂, prepared together with IF METALL. Mr Stefan Kwaśny added that the measuring methods employed by the Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) could be applied in laboratories, but not in underground mines. He cited a research project by the University of Wrocław that should render results on the health effects of exposure to NO₂ in mines by the end of 2013, and stated that no adverse effects had been found in medical research so far. Mr Manfred Steinhage reminded the committee of the stakeholder consultation on NO₂ exposure limits by DG EMPL until 15 January 2014, with a view to an envisaged joint opinion. He cited a research project by the University of Aachen that should render results in mid-2014 and a further research project by the German potash industry. Mr Patrick Carragher confirmed that there was common ground between both sides of industry with regard to a joint opinion. Hence, it was decided to hold a bureau meeting to draft joint opinion around 15 December 2013, which industriAll would then have to circulate among its affiliates. Mr Lars-Erik Folkesson argued the document should state that the social partners would need more time to take into account the results of research projects, such as those cited by Mr Kwaśny and Mr Steinhage. Hence, Mr Steinhage asked if a contribution could be received by DG EMPL after 15 January, given that the consultation process was foreseen to run until February 2014. Mr Murad Wiśniewski announced to verify this.

4. Work programme for 2014

Mr Jean-Pierre Damm proposed to include Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and relations with the Standing Working Party (SWP) to the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health as priorities in the next work programme. Ms Gitta Hulik voiced her support for the inclusion of CCS and referred to related events in the framework of the Coal Round Table organised by EURACOAL. It was, furthermore, decided to include skills – in particular, job profiles for the European Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO) taxonomy – and projects – in particular, Safer by Design and the European network on silica (NEPSI) – as priorities.

5. Meeting dates for 2014

In accordance with the meeting dates that had been proposed by the committee, Mr Wiśniewski confirmed on behalf of the Commission that the meetings would be held on 28 February, 8 May, 22 September and 24 November 2014.

6. Election of chairperson for 2014

Mr Damm thanked the committee for the opportunity to chair it in 2013. The rotating chairmanship was passed to EURACOAL on the employer side, and Mr Philip Garner was unanimously elected

chairman for 2014. As the rotating vice-chairmanship passed to the employee side, Mr Damm was unanimously elected vice-chairman for 2014.

7. NEPSI

Ms Lanne reported with regret that the most recent NEPSI project application had been rejected by DG EMPL. Mr Damm stated that the committee was more than disappointed, because it had attempted to meet all the Commissions' expectations to find a continuing solution to finance the operation of the NEPSI agreement. There was broad consent in the committee that the Commission should not first induce the European social partners to sign binding agreements and withdraw its support for the operation of these agreements afterwards. Mr Wiśniewski explained the process leading to the rejection of the project application and the evaluation of the NEPSI agreement that would now be undertaken by the Commission itself, albeit in co-operation with the parties to the agreement. Ms Lanne announced the reporting of key indicators by the sites applying the NEPSI agreement in March 2014.

8. Safer by Design

Ms Dechelle presented an update on the Safer by Design project. Ms Corinna Hebestreit described the opportunity to develop new technologies through a collaboration between the extractive industries and the manufacturing industries as excellent – not only within Europe but also for export purposes. It was decided that the committee would continue to support the project, despite its rejection under the most recent call for proposals by DG EMPL.

9. EU occupational health and safety policy framework

Mr Wiśniewski informed the committee that DG EMPL had received 523 replies during the public consultation on a possible new EU occupational safety and health policy framework from 31 May to 26 August 2013, which was a very good result and showed great interest in this issue. An overwhelming majority of 93.1 per cent of respondents agreed that there was a further need to co-ordinate policies at EU level and 75 per cent agreed that a new strategic policy framework was needed. The contributions also provided the Commission with suggestions to further improve the strategy. They confirmed the Commission's views that more attention should be given to optimising the existing EU legislative framework and its implementation, especially for SMEs; promoting social dialogue in this area; encouraging a co-ordination of national bodies; ensuring the availability of EU funds to improve health and safety conditions; improving monitoring tools to follow-up on progress made; and giving more focus to the prevention of work-related diseases. The importance of awareness-raising campaigns was confirmed. One of the main projects related to the development of the new strategic framework being undertaken by the Commission services would now be a comprehensive review of the existing 24 health and safety directives, which would address new scientific knowledge. To that end, an external contractor had been engaged and the Commission encouraged the social partners to provide them with information. An exchange of views with Mr Steinhage, Mr Damm, Ms Hebestreit, Mr Garner and Ms Dechelle ensued. It was decided to invite the contractor COWI to one of the next committee meetings.

10. Any other business

Ms Dechelle reported on the 14th European Minerals Forum that had taken place in the premises of the European Economic and Social Committee on 27 November 2014. Her information was complemented by Ms Hebestreit and Mr Wiśniewski who had also attended it. Mr Wiśniewski expressed his esteem for the event, which had featured Mr Armindo Silva, Director at DG EMPL, among the keynote speakers, as well as for the 4th European Coal Days that taken place in the European Parliament from 12 to 14 November 2014. Ms Dechelle also presented a brief update on the "Explosives for civil uses" taskforce.