



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Social Dialogue, Social Rights, Working Conditions, Adaptation to Change
Social Dialogue, Industrial Relations

Social Dialogue in the construction sector EFBWW-FIEC

Working Group on Safety and Health

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2008 in Brussels (09.30-13.00)

1. Welcome and introduction

The meeting is chaired by Mr Pelegrin (FIEC) who welcomes the participants and announces that he will chair the SSDC today and replace Mr Gascon, who, for health reasons, cannot participate in this meeting.

The Chair presents the agenda which is adopted.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 13.03.2008

The minutes are approved unanimously.

3. Nano-Technologies in Construction

Mr Gehring (EFBWW) explains quickly on the current situation concerning this issue. At the last SSDC working group meeting on Safety and Health, a presentation was given on this new technology. It was agreed that the construction industry is concerned, and that more information is necessary. Therefore, EFBWW, with the support of FIEC, has introduced a project under the European Commission's budget-line for social dialogue. A workshop will be organized where the health and technical aspects of nanotechnologies will be examined from different angles and a questionnaire will be created to get more information from the affiliated member organizations.

(In the meantime DG EMPL has confirmed the award of the grant).

Mr Campogrande (FIEC) states that FIEC had to rush during the summer break to get the approval of its members on this project. For the future, he requests that work on possible joint projects be started early enough in order to allow discussions in the group and adequate consultation of the respective members. This is accepted by EFBWW.

4. ICPCI: Project application of the Social Dialogue EFBWW/FIEC

(Slides are joined to the minutes)

Mr. Eisenbach gives a presentation on the current situation and the ongoing work on the ICPCI project. He stresses that the chemical industry and the producers of construction chemicals have been contacted and have been convinced of the importance and utility of the project. Several meetings will take place to develop a joint project. It is aimed at reaching a

general agreement which can also be easily transferred to other sectors. The plan is to introduce a new request for a grant in March 2009.

The Chair thanks Mr Eisenbach and stresses the long-term and the multi- sectoral aspect of the project. He expresses the hope that the project will be accepted by the European Commission.

In the following discussion, the question of the financing of the project is raised; could the chemical producers participate?

It is agreed to contact the agencies in Helsinki and in Bilbao to keep them informed and to ask for their support.

5. Implementation of the FIEC-EFBWW 2004 Bilbao agreement

6. Guide on Health and Safety management systems

Points 5 and 6 of the agenda are linked.

Mr Gehring (EFBWW) reminds the participants that the 2004 “Bilbao agreement” is an umbrella declaration by which FIEC and EFBWW agreed on some specific priorities. He underlines that there is a clear link between this issue and the draft “Guide on H&S management systems” proposed by FIEC and therefore suggest to discuss both items together.

Mr Spannow (BAT-EFBWW) is interested in the background of this draft guide. It would be useful to develop best practices for small and medium enterprises. In Denmark i.e., management systems for small and medium enterprises are not used at all.

Mr Lesouef (FIEC) underlines the importance of a global vision to avoid risks on the workplace. Since many Member States have their own guides, it would make sense to collect information on what exists already, and to exchange information. This is precisely the aim of this draft guide, namely to facilitate the development and implementation of H&S management systems in companies, in particular SMEs. It is a general framework that can be tailored to the needs of each company and to the specificities of each country. The document presented is only a first draft and it would be extremely useful, once finalised, if FIEC and EFBWW could jointly support and promote it.

The Chair proposes to install a small working group to work on a common paper on Health and Safety management systems, which is agreed by both parties.

7. FIEC/EFBWW work program priorities in 2009

Mr Campogrande (FIEC) insists on the points of the common multi-annual work program which FIEC would like to tackle in 2009:

- ICPCI
- Nano- materials
- Joint discussion in a small working group on a draft guide on H&S management systems and on the accident reduction program targets
- Questions of a possible EU Health and Safety card: FIEC has started a survey amongst its members in order to collect information on the scope of existing cards in some member States and on what could be done at the European level. 5 or 6 countries

where such a system exists already on a voluntary or a mandatory basis have already answered the questionnaire. It is important that such a card must not become an obstacle for mobility or cause supplementary costs.

EFBWW supports this initiative. Mr Gehring (EFBWW) underlines the connection with vocational training (which formation/qualification do workers need for special tasks). The Chair underlines this connection as well as the need for data protection and proposes to create a small working group, which is agreed.

Mr Gehring agrees for EFBWW and adds one point:

- Follow-up of the joint recommendation on the prevention of occupational stress in the construction sector: information about national activities should be gathered and the nature of the already existing tools should be checked.

FIEC agrees.

8. Miscellaneous

a) Guide on the construction site directive 92/57

The Chair reports briefly on the current situation. The consultant has been asked to improve the work done so far. The next meeting will take place at the end of February; the adoption of the final version of the paper should occur in the fall of 2009.

b) Handling of asbestos in Europe- EFBWW campaign

Mr Gehring (EFBWW) notes that there is still a high number of asbestos victims in the construction industry. EFBWW is working on this item and will activate its affiliates. More precise details will be presented at the next working group meeting. A common initiative with FIEC could probably be developed.

c) OSHA campaigns

For FIEC as well as for EFBWW it seems difficult to identify specific actions to be undertaken in the framework of the OSHA campaign on risk assessment. It is agreed to write a joint letter to inform OSHA that the construction sector will not be an official project partner; but in any case, future campaigns will be supported, if possible.

d) Mr Lesouef (FIEC) informs the working group that a French enterprise has developed a CD (in French) concerning best practices in safety measures on construction sites.

9. Next meetings

Two dates in March and in October will be proposed and will be formally approved at the plenary meeting to be held on 16 December.

The Chair thanks all the participants and the interpreters.