

## **1. Welcome and introduction**

The meeting is chaired by Mr Eisenbach (EFBWW) who welcomes the participants and announces that today he will chair the SSDC for the last time. He will be succeeded by Mr Jörn Erik Nielsen.

Mr Campogrande (FIEC) excuses Mr Gascón y Marín who is replaced by Mr Pelegrin.

The chair presents the agenda which is adopted.

## **2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 26.10.2007**

Mr Clavreul (EFBWW) requests a language modification in the French version. Item 7 – REACH, second paragraph: "... Dans le secteur de la construction, les produits chimiques causeraient moins d'accidents **que d'effets néfastes** pour la santé des travailleurs..." should be substituted by "**que d'effets graves**".

The minutes are approved with this amendment.

## **3. The new Health and Safety Strategy of the European Commission for 2007 – 2012 – perspectives for the Construction sector**

(Slides are joined to the minutes)

Mr Gehring ( EFBWW) introduces Mr Alick Morris (European Commission, F4: Health, Safety and Hygiene at work), who presents the Commission's new Health and Safety Strategy for 2007 – 2012.

The chair thanks Mr Morris and notes that the programme of the strategy is very ambitious and that the social partners in the construction industry and the European Commission are cooperating well. In answering questions from the social partners, Mr Morris announces that comments of the EP resolution and notes of the council will be taken into consideration. The social partners will be involved in the practical implementation, and monitoring will be carried out by the advisory committee.

## **4. ICPCI: Application for a European information system on chemicals**

Mr Eisenbach provides some additional information concerning the implementation of the project. The only missing document is the letter of intent from the FIEC. A common approach by the social partners is absolutely necessary for the discussions with the chemical industry,

whose representatives confirmed their willingness to participate in the project. Mr. Eisenbach also presents a comprehensive list of representative organisations of chemicals manufacturers concerned.

The novelty of REACH is that it makes the producers responsible for providing information on the degree of exposure to the chemical products. The Helsinki Agency monitors these data, but the practical implementation of the rules is lacking. Everybody is as confused as before, and even more.

Mr Pelegrin (FIEC) states that FIEC has discussed this project and has still some concerns, in particular regarding :

1. The timing of the project : as several issues still have to be implemented according to the REACH requirements (for example the new Safety Data Sheets), it would be wiser to postpone the application for a grant;
2. The fact that several key stakeholders (the European Chemicals Agency, OSHA, the representatives of the chemicals manufacturers,...) have not yet confirmed their participation in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the project;
3. The fact that the financing, in particular for the phases 2 and 3 is not yet defined.

Prudence is therefore necessary. However, given the information provided by Mr. Eisenbach concerning the involvement of the chemicals manufacturers, FIEC would be ready to sign the letter of intent.

Ms Brenda O'Brien (OSHA) adds that the Bilbao Agency is still having meetings with the Director of the Helsinki Agency. A memorandum will be prepared, and, she hopes, the two agencies will develop new ways to cooperate.

## **5. Implementation of the FIEC-EFBWW 2004 Bilbao agreement**

It is agreed that the secretariats will keep gathering information in order to prepare the upcoming debates and develop recommendations to help the national social partner organizations to design prevention strategies.

## **6. Silica dust**

The EFBWW refers to the position stated at the last meeting and asks the FIEC if a common approach is possible regarding a possible amendment of the "Carcinogens" Directive, with the aim to include silica dust in its scope. Mr Spannow (EFBWW) insists upon documents of the Bilbao Agency which clearly specify the dangerousness of silica dust.

Mr Pelegrin (FIEC) answers that this issue has been discussed and that there still exist doubts on the health-endangering implications of silica dust. At national level, Member States have already established scales with different levels of dangerousness. For scientific reasons, the FIEC is unable to come up with a decision today, but will continue to discuss whether a consensus on this issue can possibly be reached.

## **7. Bilbao: campaign on risk assessment**

(Slides are joined to the minutes).

Ms O'Brien (OSHA) gives a presentation on the new Bilbao Agency two years campaign on risk assessment. The campaign will be launched in Brussels on 13 June, followed by separate campaigns launched at national level, by the different member states. A particular event will be organized by the French Presidency. A special website will be started in April.

Mr Mordasini (EFBWW) stresses that risk assessment is a big challenge for the construction industry, for three reasons:

- a) No permanent workplaces
- b) Risks are changing as the construction progresses on each construction site
- c) Interaction of different companies on the same site.

Risk assessment implies that every person on a construction site is aware of the risks and that this knowledge must be brought on site.

The FIEC and the EFBWW welcome the campaign, but the latter insists on the fact that the social partner organizations lack the resources necessary to implement the campaign.

## **8. Miscellaneous**

- a) Guide on the construction site directive 92/57:

Mr Pelegrin (FIEC) reports on the present situation concerning this matter. A call for tenders has been launched for the Eurosheets; the report should be finished by the end of 2009. It will be difficult to create a guide for all intents and purposes for 27 countries. The EFBWW shares this opinion and adds that the Commission's report must be made available in order to have a basis for the ongoing work. The actions inside the working group should be better coordinated.

Mr Costa Tavares (FIEC) stresses the necessity of a technical guide.

The secretariats will communicate concerning the further steps to be taken.

- b) Handling of asbestos in Europe

The EFBWW briefly presents the question. Every year there are still 2000 victims of asbestos in Europe. At international level, the production volume has not decreased. The lobby for asbestos production is still very strong, mainly in Russia and in Kazakhstan. At the last EFBWW congress a resolution has been adopted to initiate actions concerning asbestos. The social partners agree to discuss, at the next meeting, which possibilities exist and which measures could be taken.

Mr Broekhuizen gives a presentation on nanomaterials. (Slides are joined to the minutes).

Mr Morris (European Commission) considers nano-security as a very important issue and states that discussions on this issue are ongoing, as well as in the REACH- framework. Ms O'Brien (OSHA) stresses that the Bilbao Agency deals also with this issue, and that some information can be found on the "observatory-website".

- c) On behalf of FIEC, Mr Pelegrin thanks Mr Eisenbach very warmly for his work in the committee during the last ten years. He points out that they were not always of the same

opinion, but that the atmosphere has always been a good one. The construction industry is a good example for a well functioning social dialogue, where every member plays his (her) part.

Mr Eisenbach thanks Mr Pelegrin and the FIEC, as well as all the participants, in particular those who had prepared presentations, and the interpreters.

## **9. Next meetings**

Working Group: 14.10.2008,

Plenary meetings: 20.5.2008, 16.12. 2008