



## **Social Dialogue in the construction sector EFBWW-FIEC**

Working Group on Safety and Health

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2012 in Brussels (09.30-13.00)

### **1. Welcome and introduction**

The meeting is chaired by Mrs Cristina Garcia Herguedas (FIEC, ES). She welcomes the participants and reads out the agenda which is adopted without changes.

### **2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 04.10.2012**

The minutes are approved unanimously with the following modification :

- add Mrs. Cristina Garcia Herguedas amongst the participants of the previous meeting.

### **3. Respirable Crystalline Silica: NEPSI Social partner Agreement on European level**

Dr Michelle Wyart-Remy, Secretary General of IMA-Europe made a presentation of the NEPSI agreement on European level.

She explains that NEPSI is the acronym for the resulting European Network for Silica formed by the Employee and Employer European sectoral associations having signed the Social Dialogue "Agreement on Workers' Health Protection Through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products Containing it" on 25 April 2006. It represents 15 industry sectors i.e. more than 2 million employees and a business exceeding €250 billion.

The signatories of the Agreement are providing information on its application within their sector for the first time in 2008 and every two years from then on. Article 7 of the Agreement requires information to be collected at site level and consolidated before being communicated to the NEPSI Council. For this purpose, a reporting format was developed. This allows each of the 15 signatory EU sector associations to provide the NEPSI Council with quantitative data on the application of the Agreement after it has been collected and consolidated from site to EU sectors level.

The monitoring exercise for 2010 report 8% more employees (462 215 employees) and 22% (5789) more sites.

Ms Andrea Husen-Bradley (EMF) commented that during the last years the risk has increased and that employers should be more transparent regarding this issue.

Some participants also mentioned the difficult to monitor real impact on the workforce. It seems that only 5% of the EU workforce in the construction is monitored in reality. Mr Ulrik Spannow (EFBWW) underlines that this campaigns are also very costly and difficult to implement but prevention is very important. Mr Eisenbach (EFBWW - DE) also raised the question in how far the NEPSI agreement hinders the implementation of Silica in the European directive on carcinogens at the workplace and whether it is true that the industry could maybe withdraw from the social partner agreement if Silica would be covered by this directive.

Mr Domenico Campogrande (FIEC) indicates that from the employer point of view, it is extremely difficult to monitor the exposure of workers in construction since there is a multitude of worksites, the working conditions are changing all the time and construction activities are temporary. The reporting foreseen in the NEPSI agreement does not take into account these specificities and this explains, amongst others, why FIEC has not signed this agreement.

#### **4. New Community Strategy on OSH 2013 - 2020:**

- Discussion and exchange of views on draft joint declaration

The opportunity to draft a joint declaration on the future Community strategy 2013-2020 was discussed. It was agreed to draft a common declaration in spring that could be agreed by the plenary session on 14 of June.

#### **. 5. New OSHA Campaign 2012-2013 “Working together for risk prevention” :**

- Presentation by B. O’Brien  
- Discussion and exchange of views

The New OSHA campaign will be launched on 20<sup>th</sup> of April. The Campaign is co-ordinated as each year by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), and the national partners in the EU’s 27 Member States and beyond.

The 2012–13 Healthy Workplaces Campaign is decentralised and is designed to help national authorities, companies, workers and their representatives and other stakeholders to work together to enhance health and safety in the workplace. Material is made available by the agency (reports, DVDs, practical guides, flyers, posters)

It focuses on risk prevention, managing risks, encouraging top managers to actively engage in risk reduction, encouraging workers, their representatives and other stakeholders to work with managers to reduce risks.

Mr Campogrande( FIEC) indicates that during the previous campaigns, because of their general scope, it was difficult to define specific sectoral actions. He is convinced that with the new campaign it will be easier elaborate joint actions and to get a support.

#### **6. Social Dialogue Project : Guide for OSH-Management System**

- Report on the state of affairs

Mr Campogrande (FIEC) reports on the current situation concerning the guide. The aim is to finalize the guide and to disseminate the text through FIEC's and EFBWW's respective affiliates in 12 EU languages (in addition to English) and make it available in June 2012. Mr Gehring (EFBWW) points out that this guide is a good example of the efficiency of the sectorial social dialogue in the construction industry

### **7. Social Dialogue Project : Information modules on Asbestos**

- Report on the state of affairs

Mr Bernd Eisenbach (EFBWW, DE) reminds that currently in Europe around 3000 cases of death per year are caused by asbestos. He reports on the activities of the Asbestos project "Information modules for the safer handling of asbestos" (VS/2011/0398). He indicated that 10 activities exposed to asbestos risks have been identified in the framework of the information modules and labelled in red, green and orange according their risks. The final conference will take place in Poland in October 2012.

### **8. Asbestos: Recognition of Diseases and their compensation**

- Presentation by EFBWW

Mr Rolf Gehring (EFBWW) indicates that EFBWW will submit a new proposal in spring on asbestos diseases in the framework of the call for proposal of the Commission for support of social dialogue. He indicates that thanks to the EUROGIP report (April 2006), information on the recognition and compensation of asbestos-related diseases in thirteen west-European countries is available. The objective of this new project is to prepare information and material on the subject of asbestos related diseases and more precisely, the recognition procedure and the compensation of recognised diseases in all the EU- and candidate countries. In this respect it is also planned to organize a two day seminar in Brussels, aiming at improved cooperation between the various actors in the asbestos field. The material shall be directed to workers' and victims' organisation.

If the project is accepted by the European Commission, the activities would start already in August 2012.

### **9. Next meeting**

The next SSDC working group meeting on Health and Safety will take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2012.