

**December 1999**  
(Final ext. version)

## **WORK PROGRAMME 2000**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1.** According to its founding Regulation, the objective of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is:

*“In order to encourage improvements, especially in the working environment, as regards the protection of the safety and health of workers as provided for in the Treaty and successive action programmes concerning safety and health at the workplace, the aim of the Agency shall be to provide Community bodies, Member States and those involved in the field of safety and health at work with scientific, technical and economic information of use in the field of safety and health at work.”*

**1.2.** The Agency’s activities are decided by the Administrative Board, based on the Four-Year Rolling Programme and a more specific annual Work Programme. As it is essential that the Agency plans and develops its activities to reflect the needs of its main user groups, the views expressed by European institutions as well as other important safety and health organisations and user groups have been taken into consideration.

**1.3.** At the European level, particular attention has been paid to the European Commission’s Social Action Programme 1998-2000, the mid-term report on the Community Programme concerning safety, hygiene and health at work (1996-2000) and the priorities expressed by the Advisory Committee. As part of a common effort between the Commission, the Agency and the Dublin Foundation, special emphasis will be placed on information activities that can support the priority areas identified in the Commission’s mid-term report. This Work Programme also reflects the strategy discussions about the future development of the Agency - into the next millennium

**1.4.** According to its Regulation, the Agency has consulted the European Commission and the Advisory Committee for Safety, Hygiene and Health at Work before presenting the final draft to the Board. Consultation has also taken place with the Dublin Foundation, as laid down in the

Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions. The final version of the Work Programme has been discussed and approved by the Board in November 1999.

**1.5.** This Work Programme for 2000 should be seen in the context of the Rolling Programme 1997-2000 and the multiannual activities of the Work Programme for 1999. It reflects on the one hand, the need for further consolidation of the organisation and activities undertaken in 1998 and 1999, and on the other, the need for new information activities to support and add value to the formulation and implementation of safety and health policies at European and Member State level.

**1.6.** The presentation of planned activities is structured according to three main areas:

- Information network – building the links
- Information services – communicating knowledge
- Information projects – collecting knowledge

**1.7.** As regards the Agency's financial resources, the Work Programme is based on a budget of 6,880 MEUR<sup>1</sup>.

## **2. INFORMATION NETWORK – BUILDING THE LINKS**

**2.1.** In order to achieve the Agency's goal to be the most important European occupational safety and health information resource on the Internet, the further development of the Agency's information network and active contribution from all its participants is of major importance. During 2000, the Agency will continue its effort to provide valid information and give access to an ever-increasing stock of safety and health knowledge.

**2.2.** The Agency will continue the process of consolidation and stepwise expansion of the national, European and international information networks. This reflects the identified needs and priorities regarding the collection and dissemination of safety and health information within the key categories of the Agency web-site; namely, Legislation, Good Practice, Research, Statistics, Systems and Programmes, Training, Publications, News and Events, and Topics.

**2.3.** At European level, special attention will be given to the strategic co-operation with the services of the Commission (e.g. DG Employment and Social Affairs, DG Research, DG Information Society, DG Enterprises, Eurostat) and other EU-bodies, including the OPOCE, the Dublin Foundation and other Agencies. Another important priority is the gradual extension of the Agency's network to the applicant countries. This will follow the principles set out in the Commission's Communication to the Council about the participation of Candidate Countries in Community programmes, Committees and Agencies. Also, the working arrangements with the EFTA countries on web-site co-operation and participation in certain projects will be further developed in accordance with the Agency Regulation and the principles of the EEA-agreement. Finally, the co-operation initiated in 1999 with the European Standardisation Organisations will continue.

**2.4.** At international level, the network relations and exchange of information with the ILO, WHO, PAHO, IARC, OECD, WTO, ISSA and other important organisations active in the field of safety and health at work, will be developed further. The construction of links to safety and health administrations and information providers in third countries will continue progressively, based on the

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<sup>1</sup> Incl. 0.180 MEUR contribution to the rent of the Agency's premises from the Spanish Government and Basque authorities

many important contacts already established. Special attention will be given to information exchange with the United States, as agreed at the Joint EU-US Conference in October 1998 in Luxembourg, and to active participation in the preparation of the next Joint Conference in November 2000.

**2.5.** Based on its contacts with health and safety practitioners and with European networks of professionals/practitioners, the Agency expects to organise a workshop/seminar. This will enhance its co-operation with such networks, in particular, as regards information exchange on good safety and health practice.

**2.6.** Furthermore, the Agency will co-operate, as appropriate, with organisers of events such as the Swedish Work-Life 2000 workshops.

**2.7.** The Agency will develop its co-operation with the Focal Point network along the lines of the conclusions and follow-up of the Pre-Board Seminar, held in March 1999. This seminar stressed, amongst other issues, the tripartite character of the national Focal Point networks, the importance of proper communication and work procedures between the Agency and the Focal Points and Focal Point involvement in the Agency's decision-making process. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Focal Points, proposals for a more flexible approach to data collection have been formulated and are under consideration. In 2000, the Agency's expert networks, comprising the Thematic Network Groups, Internet Group and National Editors Group will also play an important role in advising the Agency in its different information activities, including the tasks carried out by external consultants.

**2.8.** The first four Topic Centres of the Agency have been established following the Board's designation in November 1998. The Board will decide on the prolongation of these Topic Centres at its November meeting, based on a review prepared by the Agency with assistance from an evaluation committee. Existing arrangements might be renewed for another year, with some necessary amendments as regards organisation and tasks of the current Topic Centres on Good Safety and Health Practice and on Research on Work and Health. No further Topic Centres are proposed in this draft Work Programme.

**2.9.** The Agency's network technology, based on Internet, will be further improved during 2000, with better navigation and search facilities (index, keywords etc) and the implementation of a comprehensive plan for Intra- and Extranet facilities to support communication within the network. Further, the promotion of the Agency's information services on Internet via systematic links to community information systems like libraries, schools, public services etc. and through subject oriented web-sites, as well as safety and health telematics will be explored. As regards the information content, the Agency's data collection and Internet linking efforts will increase within the priority areas of the Work Programme.

**2.10.** As part of a general evaluation of the Agency in 2000/2001 the network structure of the Agency as well as the network technology will be assessed by an external contractor.

### **3. INFORMATION SERVICES – COMMUNICATING KNOWLEDGE**

**3.1** In addition to the information provided on the new Agency web-site, the communication of information about safety and health issues to the key target groups of the Agency through the following complementary information services will be given priority:

- News Information

- Corporate Information
- Project Information
- Event Information
- European Week 2000
- Information requests

**3.2** In order to ensure cost-efficient Agency publications, these will, in future, be produced with assistance from the Office of Publications (OPOCE). A pricing and distribution policy will be established for paper publications that are of interest to a wider public. These will be priced at cost; however, the practice of distributing a limited number of publications for free to key network partners and stakeholders will remain unchanged.

**3.3** Under News Information, three to four of the Agency's *News* will be issued, covering the latest safety and health developments at Member State, EU- and international level. Furthermore, two issues of the Agency's *Magazine* will be published, each focusing on a major occupational safety and health topic: in 2000, the subjects will be 'Safety and Health and Employability' and 'Musculo-Skeletal Disorders (MSD)'. *News* will be available on Internet in all eleven official Community languages and in paper as for the *Magazine* in four (De, En, Fr and Es).

**3.4** Corporate Information covers the production and distribution of a new Agency brochure, the Annual Report 1999, of further Fact Sheets and Folders, in the 11 Community languages on paper and/or Internet. In order to ensure appropriate press coverage of Agency events and publications, a press resource will be established in all Member States. The Agency's communication strategy will be reviewed based on evaluation of user satisfaction and needs as regards Agency information services and products. (See 5.3)

**3.5** Information Services foresees the publication of 8 information projects, on Internet and in paper. These publications will result from the Agency's data collection within four key areas: Good Practice, Research, Systems and Programmes and OSH-Monitoring.

**3.6** As regards Event Services, the Agency is planning a major safety and health event in connection with the European Week 2000. The event planned to take place in Bilbao in November 2000 would be a celebration of the first "European Good Practice Awards", rewarding good practice as regards the prevention of MSD's and back-pain. The Agency has established contacts with the French Presidency in order to formulate possible forms of co-operation. Concerning the preparation of a European Week 2001, a proposal will be prepared for the Board meeting in February 2000, subject to the foreseen evaluation of the Week 2000 and to budget prospects.

The Agency will also support information activities related to a major safety and health event about emerging safety and health risks related to changes in work organisation during the Portuguese Presidency. The Agency plans to participate in the 2000 Birmingham Health and Safety Fair and Congress, and to contribute to the European Union representation at the EXPO 2000 in Hanover. The Agency will co-organise a workshop/seminar for safety and health practitioners, and a seminar is also planned for non-EU partners. This latter event, however, is subject to the Commission's Communication about the role of Agencies in the enlargement process and dependent on additional funding.

**3.7** Following the European Parliament's Budgets Committee approval of the budgetary transfer of EUR 914.000 (1999 budget) for the European Week 2000 proposal to the Agency, the Agency will organise an awareness raising campaign on the prevention of musculo-skeletal disorders (MSD),

with special emphasis on back pain. The organisation of the Week centres on the promotion and co-funding of projects focusing on the topic at national level. Half of the funding will be devoted to good practice in SME's.

The preparation of the Week will start in autumn 1999 and continue throughout 2000, culminating in European Week events across all Member States in October 2000. The launch of the Week will be organised together with the Portuguese Presidency and will take place in Lisbon by mid-February. The Agency will organise project activities related to the Week (see chapter 4), as well as a major event together with the French Presidency (see item 3.6 above). As the European Week is an annual event, preparation for 2001 needs to commence in the second half of 2000, subject to the results of an evaluation of the Week 2000 and to additional budgetary resources.

**3.8** Another important information service that the Agency will provide is related to information requests. The Agency has established a policy for handling daily requests about safety and health issues from different organisations and individuals, and responds to these on a routine basis. More in-depth information requests from key stakeholders of the Agency, that is the Commission, Member States and Social Partners, will be processed according to a set of criteria agreed by the Bureau and within the given budgetary framework.

**3.9** Finally, a communication strategy for the Agency and its network will be developed, based on research into user needs and satisfaction with the Agency's present information products and services. This survey will be organised as part of an overall evaluation of the Agency in 2000/2001.

#### **4. INFORMATION PROJECTS – DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE**

**4.1** The delivery of information projects, that support and add value to safety and health policy making and implementation at European and national level, will be another important output of the Agency in 2000. The Agency's information projects will be organised around four key activity areas:

- OSH-Monitoring
- Good Safety and Health Practice
- Research on Work and Health
- OSH-Systems and Programmes

**4.2** Within each of these activity areas general information from European and international sources will be placed on Internet with assistance from Topic Centres and other consultants. The Agency will continue with a number of ongoing project activities that were initiated as part of the 1999-Work Programme, as well as initiating some new projects that are being proposed to the Board in November. In the section that follows, information about ongoing and new projects is presented separately under each key area and, at the end, is summarised in one table.

**4.3** Concerning proposals for new projects, it is important to note that, as the Agency's resources available for information projects in 2000 are basically the same as in 1999, such activities will only be initiated on a rolling basis. This means that, for each area, new activities will only start when ongoing projects are finished. In this way, resource demands, e.g. related to data collection in the Member States, or in relation with the Topic Centres, will be kept at a stable level within each information category. The new projects will have a significantly reduced impact on Focal Point network resources.

**4.4** Besides three new initiatives: Focus-projects on the State of OSH, OSH-Management, and Promotion of Good Practice, two new thematic project categories will be carried out:

The first introduces a *sector approach*, following the suggestion to carry out information projects related to the health care sector. The second is related to the *European Week 2000*, following the suggestion to carry out projects related to the Week within the information category research, good practice and systems and programmes.

**4.5** The Agency intends to set up a financing scheme for the Focal Point contributions to the planned information activities. Each of these will be planned in close co-operation with the Focal Points in order to ensure the most appropriate work organisation according to the conclusions of the Pre-Board Seminar.

### **OSH-Monitoring**

**4.6** Ongoing projects:

- Evaluation of methods and development of a model for future information collection about the State of OSH in the EU, including a user-friendly electronic version on Internet in co-operation with the Commission, Eurostat and the Dublin Foundation (1999-2000).
- Collection of information/data about the estimated impact of occupational safety and health on the employability of workers in the European Union (1999-2000).

**4.7** New projects:

- Evaluation of the Agency Information project “State of Occupational Safety and Health in the European Member States”: 2-4 Focus-Reports based on the outcome of the State of OSH project (2000-2001)<sup>2</sup>

### **Good Safety and Health Practice**

**4.8** Ongoing projects:

- Organisation of general data collection about good safety and health practice, as well as more specific data-collection, preparation of status reports and Internet developments and updating information related to the following topics (1999-2000):
  - Substitution of dangerous substances (asbestos and organic solvents)
  - Stress at work
  - Musculo-skeletal disorders (incl. assistance to European Week 2000)

**4.9** New projects:

- Development of a sector related information-system on “health care services”. An OSH information system for the health care sector to be developed with assistance from an

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<sup>2</sup> Issues expected to be decided by the Board in February 2000 following a pre-Board seminar on the results of the State of OSH.

external contractor and the Topic Centres based on the findings of a pre-project (2000-2001). See also 4.11

- Information on Good Practice related to control methods for reducing the risk of exposure to organic solvents and asbestos (supplementary information to the ongoing data collection on substitution see 4.8) (2000).
- Promotion of Good Practice via three new activities:
  - firstly, the establishment of an Email Network in order to support information exchange between safety and health practitioners and experts about good safety and health practice.
  - secondly, the development of a strategy for networking between large-scale good practice and related databases based on an analysis of and systematic links to existing databases and a workshop with the managers of those databases.
  - thirdly, a feasibility study of the development and implementation of an Agency Good Practice Recognition Scheme/Self-evaluation that can increase the interest of companies and consultancies etc. in sharing good practice.

All three activities will be carried out with assistance from the Topic Centres and other external consultants (2000).

### **Research on Work and Health**

#### **4.10** Ongoing projects:

- Organisation of general data collection about safety and health research as well as more specific data-collection, preparation of a status report and Internet developments and updating existing information related to the following topics (1999-2000):
  - Stress at work
  - Musculo-skeletal disorders (incl. contribution to European Week 2000)
  - The changing world of work
- Preparation of a final common document about future research needs and priorities at EU-level, based on the survey of Member State priorities and Research Seminar carried out in 1999 (1999-2000).

#### **4.11** New projects:

- Contribution to the organisation of the European Week 2000 with research information activities about MSD, with special emphasis on back pain and back injuries (supplementary to the project about neck and upper limb disorders that will be finalised in 1999). To be carried out with assistance from the Topic Centre (2000).
- Contribution to the OSH information system for the Health Care Sector, with assistance from the Topic Centre on Work and Health (2000-2001). See also 4.9

## OSH-Systems and Programmes

### 4.12 Ongoing projects:

- New ways to improve safety and health: OSH as a subject for subcontracting (procurement) and marketing (1999-2000).
- OSH-campaigns: an inventory of campaigns, identification of success factors and establishment of a model on how to organise campaigns (1999-2000).
- Safety and health and employability: survey of OSH-related systems and programmes in the Member States, aiming to increase the employability of workers in the European Union (1999-2000)

### 4.13 New projects:

- The use of OSH-management systems: survey of practices in the Member States and of activities at European and international level (2000).
- Contribution to the organisation of the European Week 2000 with information about the socio-economic impact of work related MSD (2000).

**Table 4 Information projects 2000**

	<b>OSH-Monitoring</b>	<b>Good Practice</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Systems and Programmes</b>
<b>Ongoing projects (1999 – 2000)</b>	Evaluation of the State of OSH	Substitution of asbestos and organic solvents	Changing world of work	OSH in subcontracting and marketing
	Impact of OSH on employability	Stress at work	Stress at work	OSH-campaigns
		Musculo skeletal disorders (EW) <sup>3</sup>	Musculo skeletal disorders (EW)	OSH and employability
			Future research priorities	
<b>New projects (2000 – 2001)</b>	Focus-reports on State of OSH	Health care sector	Health care sector	OSH-management systems
		Asbestos and organic solvents (other issues)		Socio-economic impact of MSD (EW)
		Promotion of Good Practice		

<sup>3</sup> (EW) means European Week 2000



## **5. OTHER AGENCY MATTERS**

### **- Management**

**5.1** The Agency will continue to develop its financial, personnel and IT-management systems in accordance with general developments at EU-level and the specific needs of the Agency, e.g. following the advice of the Court of Auditors and the Financial Controller. In addition, the Agency will focus on the development of its project and quality management systems, as important tools for the proper implementation of its Work Programme. Finally the Agency will develop its management and organisation based on the concept of key values.

### **- Agency premises**

**5.2** The Agency must take a decision regarding its final premises by the end of the year 2000, when the present rental contract for Gran Via 33 expires (with the possibility of prolongation). A working group will be established in 2000, with the following Spanish Institutions: General Administration of the Spanish State, Basque Government and the Diputación Foral of Vizcaya, in order to clarify the alternatives and to prepare the Board's decision.

### **- Agency evaluation**

**5.3** The Agency will in 2000/2001 carry out an external evaluation of its network organisation, services and products. The evaluation will be used to review its achievements so far (since September 1996) and to give an input to its future development. A special outcome will be recommendations for a revised communication strategy based on the evaluation of user satisfaction and needs. It will also be designed so it can be of use for the European Commission as a background document for the review of the Agency Regulation.