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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

UK Presidency of the EU - Report on HSE's Programme

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Cleared by Jonathan Rees on 13 January 2006

Issue

1. To report on the success and outcomes from HSE's programme for the Presidency of the European Union, July – December 2005.

Timing

2. Routine. There are no urgent actions arising from this paper.

Recommendation

3. That the Commission:
 - notes the success of HSE's Presidency Programme and outcomes from the events hosted by HSE (**Annex 1**); and
 - notes the outcomes paper from the principal event (**Annex 2**) and the briefing paper 'UK Priorities for the new EU OSH Strategy 2007-2012' (**Annex 5**), which they may wish to refer to in dealing with questions on this issue.

Background

4. HSC/05/106 detailed HSE's plans for the UK Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2005. This paper reports on the success and outcomes of this programme. It comprised five major events which HSE either hosted or co-hosted:
 - A conference on the Future of Occupational safety and Health in the EU, Liverpool, 18/19th October 2005;
 - A meeting of the Committee of Competent Authorities (CCA) for the Seveso Directive (implemented in the UK as the Control of Major Accident Hazard or COMAH regulations), Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) Buxton, Derbyshire, 12-13 October 2005;
 - A meeting of the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC), Lancaster House, London, 9-10th November 2005 ;
 - A joint meeting (co-hosted with DEFRA) of the Competent Authorities for the Chemical Existing Substances and Marketing and Use Regulations (Directive 67/548/EC and Council Regulation 793/93/EEC) and the REACH Working Group – London, 28-30 November 2005; and
 - The closing event (co-hosted with the European Agency) for the 2005 European Week of Safety and Health at Work, Bilbao, 12 December 2005.
5. Brief reports on these events are set out at **Annex 1**. HSC/E have also been involved in a number of other Presidency events, as detailed in **Annex 6**

The outcome of the Conference on the Future of Occupational safety and Health in the EU, 18/19th October, Liverpool

6. The Liverpool event was the centrepiece of HSE's Presidency programme. It had the key aim of exercising significant early influence on the shape of the next EU OSH Strategy to run from 2007-2012. The output from the second day, a closed meeting of European Directors General of Health and Safety, was an outcomes paper setting out their ideas on the shape and content of the next EU OSH strategy. This was then sent under the cover of a letter signed by the UK and the forthcoming Austrian and Finnish Presidencies to Mme Odile Quintin, the Director General of the Commission's Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Mme Quintin has since replied, welcoming the results of the conference; adding that the outcomes would indeed help the EC in developing the next strategy. Copies of the paper, the DGs' letter and Mme Quintin's reply are at **Annexes 2, 3 and 4**.
7. The paper makes clear that the starting point of the new strategy is about the continuing need to protect people and maintain and improve OSH outcomes. It emphasises that there is no incompatibility between these objectives and pursuing an active better regulation (as distinct from deregulation) agenda that yields legislation that works, achieves its purpose and is enforceable. It reflects the UK priorities for the strategy in its five themes:
 - Mainstreaming occupational safety and health.
 - Better Regulation.

- Targeting interventions for maximum results.
 - Setting targets to deliver outcomes.
 - Building an evidence base
8. By bringing in the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies as co-signatories to the letter, we sought to attain consistency of approach to the development and negotiation of the new strategy during 2006. The incoming Austrian Presidency has acknowledged this and has flagged up the need to maintain momentum on it, see:http://www.eu2006.at/en/Policy_Areas/Employment_Social_Policy_Health_and_Consumer_Affairs/Employment.html#protection). The letter and paper are also being circulated widely among European Government contacts, the social partners and key Whitehall contacts in order to inform and influence the debate on the next strategy.
9. Hence the Liverpool event has provided the European Commission with a helpful foundation for preparing the next EU OSH strategy, that reflects UK priorities, has the blessing of European Directors General of Health and safety and the support of the next two Presidencies.

Core script for UK lobbying on the new strategy

10. A briefing document on 'UK Priorities for the new EU OSH Strategy 2007-2012' (**Annex 5**) has also been produced to facilitate lobbying and discussion with interested stakeholders. The document, which is in line with the DGs' collective conclusions, can be used to press key UK concerns. Commissioners may find this useful when discussing the new strategy with interested stakeholders.

Outcomes of the other HSE hosted/co-hosted events and other Presidency issues.

11. The Austrian Presidency has agreed to follow up work on the connection between the Dangerous Substances Directive and the Seveso Directive (CHIP and COMAH) at the CCA meeting in their Presidency in January. HSE will provide support, increasing the momentum for a "smarter" approach to major hazards regulation.
12. To maintain the momentum of the Liverpool event and of the London SLIC meeting, the next SLIC meeting in the Austrian Presidency will focus on SLIC's input to the EU OSH strategy. SLIC has agreed to re-establish its strategy working group with Sandra Caldwell as chair.
13. The REACH working group discussion on information transfer to MS will continue and a proposal on enforcement will be discussed at the next meeting. Existing chemical assessment arrangements will remain in place pending REACH implementation (for which political agreement was agreed in December 2005 – a notable success for the UK Presidency) and further discussions have been proposed upon risk management of nanotechnology formulations.
14. This paper is not intended to cover in detail progress on the health and safety legislative proposals introduced by the European Commission that are currently under negotiation or being implemented in the UK. Such information is given in detail in HSE's quarterly newsletter *Euronews*:

(see: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/europe/euronews.htm>). However the Commission may wish to note during our Presidency, there was a successful conclusion to the negotiations on the proposed Physical Agents (Optical Radiation) Directive. Following amendments proposed by the European Parliament, the EC and the Council agreed to the removal of references to the provisions covering natural optical radiation (sunlight) from the proposal.

Consultation

15. The paper has been cleared with Specific Interventions Division, Communications Directorate, RPD, the International Chemicals Unit and the Director of Field Operations.

Presentation

16. As expected the HSE EU presidency events gained little media coverage. Most other UK Presidency events fared the same way and any limited coverage tended to be negative. However, there were no critical reports of HSE's events; in fact some very positive reports were carried e.g. in The Times, on the work done by the Association of British Orchestras to protect musicians' hearing, which won a good practice award at the Bilbao event.

Costs and Benefits

17. Benefits accruing to HSE/the UK from running the Presidency events are:-

- enhancing the UK's/HSE's reputation in Europe,
- incorporating many UK priorities into the outcomes document; and
- disseminating UK views on the strategic direction of H&S in Europe to a wide audience of influential figures on the European stage.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

18. The total cost of running the three Presidency events, including HSE staff costs, is in the order of £420k. About 70% of this will be funded by grants from the EC and the DWP, with the remainder coming from HSE/HSL's current budgets.

Environmental Implications

19. DEFRA co-hosted one of the events in London and had an interest in the CCA event at Buxton, which the Environment Agency (EA) also attended.

Other Implications

20. HSE has sought to exert substantial early influence on the shape of the next EU OSH strategy. We know that a number of other Member States share our thinking. This should be beneficial when development and negotiation of the strategy begins in 2006. There are no specific implications for local authorities or devolution. The outcomes paper explicitly recognises the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Action

21. The Commission is invited to:-

- i. note that HSE has hosted/co-hosted five events as part of its Presidency, the success of which reflects well on the UK, HSC and HSE; and
- ii. make use of the 'UK Priorities for the new EU OSH Strategy 2007-2012' and outcomes documents (**Annexes 2 and 5**).

Reports on Health and Safety Presidency events

Conference on the Future of Occupational safety and Health in the EU, Liverpool, 18/19th October.

1. The key aim of this event was to seek to exercise significant early influence on the shape and content of the next EU OSH Strategy, to run from 2007-2012. The first day, chaired by Bill Callaghan, was attended by some 128 representatives of Governments, the social partners, health and safety practitioners and other stakeholders from almost all the current MS and candidate countries. Lord Hunt attended and gave a keynote address. Very positive feedback has been received – 87% of those returning evaluation forms indicated they found the conference useful or very useful. 82% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference had been useful to help provide ideas for the next strategy. The event was also very well received by European Commission officials. Sayeed Khan, Hugh Robertson, Elizabeth Snape and Danny Carrigan attended on behalf of HSC. The second day was devoted to a closed meeting of European Directors General of Health and Safety and focused on a UK paper on the next EU OSH strategy. The key conclusions were recorded in an outcomes paper, which identified five themes:-

- i. Mainstreaming occupational health and safety;
- ii. Better Regulation;
- iii. Targeting interventions for maximum results;
- iv. Setting targets to deliver outcomes;
- v. Building an evidence base.

2. The paper has now been sent under cover of a letter signed by the UK and forthcoming Austrian and Finnish Presidencies to Mme Odile Quintin, the Director General of the Commission's Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Mme Quintin has since replied, welcoming the results of the conference; adding that the outcomes would indeed help the EC in developing the next strategy. Copies of the paper, the DGs' letter and Mme Quintin's reply are at **Annexes 2, 3 and 4.**

Major Hazards Committee of Competent Authorities (CCA) meeting, Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) Buxton, Derbyshire, 12-13 October 2005

3. The 14th meeting of the CCA was divided into two parts: the first a seminar, held at HSL Buxton and the second, the CCA meeting proper, held at the Palace Hotel, Buxton. This was a stimulating meeting; the feedback from Member States and the EC has been very positive. The seminar aimed to introduce the idea of working smarter within the Seveso Directive (implemented in the UK by the COMAH Regulations) in the context of the chemical warehousing sector. It included a "live" fire demonstration, showing the amount of damage an intermediate bulk container filled with flammable

material can cause. It provided members with a better understanding of the hazards of this sector and helped to develop a number of ideas to improve the way regulators make Seveso work. In addition HSE was able to promote the facilities and skills available at HSL.

4. The UK used the CCA meeting to raise a specific issue – the application of the directive to a multinational company with sites in a number of MS - and the much broader question of the connection between the Dangerous Substances Directive (DSD, implemented in the UK as CHIP) and the Seveso Directive. On the DSD-Seveso connection, HSE argued that a significant number of sites now being drawn under Seveso presented very limited major accident risks and that some mechanism should be used to avoid their being drawn in. That issue is now clearly noted and, while support from the Commission was limited, Member States readily acknowledged the problem in the margins of the meeting. HSE will continue to pursue this issue.

Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) Meeting, Lancaster House, London 9-10th November 2005

5. SLIC meet for two days. On the first, its thematic day, it explored how specific health issues have been addressed in practice by different MS Labour Inspectorates. The second day comprised the formal EU Commission-lead meeting. The thematic day broke new ground by adopting an exhibition style with a focus on how to influence stakeholders to change their behaviour and take action. This new approach, with greater emphasis on problem solving and sharing good practice through small interactive groups, was well received and feedback from delegates as well as the Commission was universally positive.
6. The formal SLIC meeting provided a number of opportunities to steer efforts towards initiatives aimed at achieving outcomes in areas relevant to all MS (e.g. construction, MSD) and away from issues that might dissipate such activity. At the next SLIC meeting, which will be held in Vienna in Spring 2006, the thematic day will focus on SLIC's input to the next EU OSH strategy. To maintain sustained effort in this area, SLIC agreed to re-establish its strategy working group and the UK (Sandra Caldwell) has been asked to chair thus providing another route for the UK to help shape the OSH strategy.

12th Joint meeting of the Chemical Existing Substances and Marketing and Use Regulations (Directive 67/548/EC and Council Regulation 793/93/EEC) Competent Authorities and the EC REACH Working Group – 28-30 November 2005

7. These meetings were held at the QE II Conference Centre, Westminster and were co-hosted with DEFRA. They also met with considerable success and were well received. The REACH Working Group focussed mainly on information transmission to MS, e.g. on progress on REACH (for which political agreement was agreed in December 2005 – a notable success for the UK Presidency) and on the development of the IT systems for the new EU Chemicals Agency. A proposal from the Chemicals Legislation European

Enforcement Network (CLEEN) for a new REACH Implementation Project on enforcement was positively received. The outcome may be that an enforcement group would become a subgroup of the EC's Working Group on REACH. This will be considered further and discussed at the next Working Group meeting.

8. At the Joint Competent Authorities (CAs) meeting, it was agreed that the existing systems would continue until REACH comes into force. For Notification of New Substances (NONS) and the Existing Substances Regulation (ESR), this means business as usual until mid-2008 (assuming REACH comes into force in mid-2007). The European Commission (EC) estimates all scheduled work on ESR substances will be completed, assuming present throughputs are maintained.
9. The meeting also discussed nanotechnology; an issue of concern to all CAs. It was agreed that existing EU legislation provided a suitable framework for managing the perceived risks (especially for classification and labelling though views were more mixed for NONS and ESR) but there was a need for technical guidance. Industry was keen to avoid separate notification of nano formations of new or existing substances. Discussion at OECD level was noted and welcomed. The EC noted that the issue would be discussed at future CA meetings and would write to all CAs inviting nominations for experts to prepare technical guidance. HSE signalled willingness to participate and contribute expertise.

Closing Event for the 2005 European Week of Safety and Health at Work, Bilbao, Spain, 12 December 2005.

10. Together with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, HSE co-hosted the Closing Event of the European Week 2005 (EW2005) campaign - also billed as "The European Noise Summit", as noise at work the theme for EW2005. The Closing Event is co-hosted with the holder of the EU Presidency.
11. Lord Hunt was due to attend and participate in the event but other Ministerial priorities forces his late withdrawal. Sayeed Khan deputised as the official representative of the UK Presidency. Professor Khan gave the keynote speech on the issue of noise at work, participated in the press conference and took part in a round table discussion. Other attendees included EU Commissioner Vladimír Špidla, European Agency Director Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, and other representatives from the EC and both the European and national social partners.
12. At an evening ceremony held after the Summit, European Good Practice Awards 2005 were presented by Commissioner Špidla, Sayeed Khan and Hans-Horst Konkolewsky. As part EW2005, the entries were examples of good practice in managing noise risks. The UK entry, from the Association of British Orchestras (ABO), was among the six winning entries from the 32 entries received by the Agency. ABO's entry demonstrated measures undertaken to raise awareness of the problem of noise induced hearing loss of musicians and solutions to reduce their exposure to noise. It received very favourable press coverage - see paragraph 14 of main paper.

Development of New Community OSH Strategy: OSH Director Generals' Contribution

Introduction

EU Directors General of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) met on 19th October 2005 and discussed five themes they believed to be key for the new Community OSH Strategy. We also benefited enormously from the presence of Senior Commission officials (Mr Jansen, Mr Biosca, and others).

The starting point for their discussion was a UK Presidency paper setting out some initial thoughts on these five themes. This paper had been developed in the light of discussion with Member States (MSs), Social Partners and the European Commission (EC) in the run up to the October meeting. It also reflected the outcome from the Evaluation Seminar in July and discussions in the Government Interest Group of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work.

Different Directors General introduced and championed discussions under each of the five themes, drawing on their rich and varied national experiences. After each session, key points of agreement were noted and are recorded below, together with the Chair's concluding reflections. It is our collective hope that this note will be a valuable guide to the Commission in developing its Communication on the new Community OSH Strategy. As the Commission representative pointed out at the outset, the Community Strategy needs to be an interface and catalyst for MSs' national strategies, and so it is essential that MSs are proactive in contributing to its development.

(1) Mainstreaming occupational health and safety

DGs agreed that mainstreaming OSH (i.e. **integrating** considerations of OSH into the development and implementation of other policies) should be a central pillar of the next Community Strategy. We will achieve more by working in partnership with others, exploiting synergies to gain added leverage and **visibility** for our messages.

There was broad agreement about the **link between OSH and competitiveness**. But if we are to mainstream OSH into this key area of Community activity, DGs agreed that we must have simple clear messages: in particular, the message that good health and safety is good business, not an impediment – an aid to competitiveness, not a barrier.

The choice of fields for mainstreaming activity is important. Mainstreaming requires significant effort, and represents both an operational and political challenge to ensure that it becomes a reality rather than words in a document. DGs wanted a pragmatic approach, **agreeing priorities** for attention at both EU and national levels, on the basis of key criteria. They prioritised the following policies:

- **research** – a foundation policy
- **public health** and the **ageing population** – sister policies

- **education and business formation** – instrument policies
- the **financial sector (in particular, insurance)** – incentivising policies

DGs recognised that this work must begin ‘at home’ – not just in their own Member States but also in their own ministries. They undertook to draw linkages between OSH and other parts of their ministries’ agendas, and to be ready to discuss with national partners what the priorities for mainstreaming should be in the next Community OSH strategy.

(2) Better Regulation

DGs agreed that this was an important, and sensitive, topic. They were clear that better regulation did not mean deregulation, though they recognised some fears in this respect. At the heart of the better regulation agenda is a desire for regulations that are:

- **evidence-based** – with full understanding of their impact;
- **modern** – relevant to the current state of scientific and technical knowledge and to modern businesses;
- **easily understood** – not too complicated, particularly for small businesses;
- carrying **no unnecessary red tape** or administrative burden;
- **enforceable** – so that they can be implemented consistently; and
- **driving real improvements** in OSH.

New legislative proposals

There was broad acceptance that the EU now had a detailed and comprehensive body of worker protection legislation. New legislation should be considered only if there was clear evidence that it was needed. DGs identified the importance of **making the fiche d’impact system work effectively**. Ex-post evaluations of directives would become easier when there had been a thorough ex-ante evaluation against which to compare what had happened in practice. Some suggested consideration of ‘**sunset clauses**’ in any new legislation, with five yearly checks that the regulations were still required.

Current stock of legislation

The drive for better regulation must occur at both European and national level. DGs agreed that the initial onus was on each Member State to simplify and modernise the matters under their national control, including the ways that they had nationally transposed EU Directives. Problems could be due to national legislation more than EU legislation, and **much could therefore be achieved at national level**: e.g. Sweden reported significant reductions in national legislation, without loss of outcome. DGs noted initiatives by the Netherlands, Denmark and the UK to reduce the administrative burden of regulations upon business, and to simplify their national stock of regulation, making compliance easier without loss of outcome. At the same time some Member States (e.g. the Netherlands) favoured a more radical **simplification** of the acquis of health and safety legislation **at Community level** – not to lower standards but rather to assist compliance by small businesses in particular.

DGs recognised a role for the new Community strategy in:

- **sharing best practice** in this field, so that the gains of better regulation could be experienced across Europe
- **solving difficulties together:** in particular, considering any implications for EU directives arising from these national simplification initiatives.
- **Identifying priorities for simplification** without loss of outcomes.

DGs took note of the initiative by Germany to collaborate in developing a methodology for systematic evaluation of EU Directives. They recognised the difficulties in evaluating existing legislation, and also the progress already achieved under the Commission's leadership. They suggested in particular that the cost of compliance with legislation, the comprehensibility of the legislation and the guidance accompanying it might usefully be evaluated.

(3) Targeting interventions for maximum results

The Directors General agreed that securing compliance through enforcement and other measures would continue to form an important element of Member States' health and safety systems. But the use of this model alone is not sufficient to deal with the industrial and commercial environment in Europe today. We need to look for new ways to promote and achieve good standards of OSH.

In addition, a flexible range of interventions is required that can cope with the differing challenges posed by large trans-national companies and the increasing number of Small and Medium sized (SMEs) developing in the European Union. For example, developing reward and recognition programmes that can recognise as beacons of excellence, large companies efficiently managing health and safety.

This approach (used in Denmark, Ireland and to some extent in Germany) offers the double benefit of freeing up regulators' scarce resource to deploy elsewhere and the possibility of using such companies to promote and spread good practice. Linked to this, it will be helpful to explore new ways to incentivise self-monitoring and improvement using intermediaries.

A different approach is required for SMEs in terms of providing simple, easily understood risk based messages and advice best delivered by intermediaries.

(4) Setting targets to deliver outcomes

DGs reflected on the previous day's discussion on target-setting. They recognised that **targets were an important political signal**, and could increase the visibility of OSH on the political agenda. To be effective, it was necessary to have a limited number of targets, and clarity about roles and responsibilities in meeting targets. It was also important to recognise the limitations of targets: targets cannot do the job alone.

DGs heard with interest a progress report on the 'Nordic Scoreboard' initiative, set up as a vehicle to monitor Member States' progress against the actions they committed to in Council Resolution 2002/C 161/01 on the current EU OSH strategy. Some MSs have

joined this initiative subsequently, and others expressed interest at the meeting of doing so now. The value of the scoreboard lay in helping individual Member States **prioritise national actions**, and in identifying areas where **Member States could with benefit work together**. The choice of measures in the scoreboard inevitably prioritised certain areas: there was a case for developing a similar instrument alongside the development of the new Strategy, rather than subsequently.

DGs agreed that the Scoreboard was a useful tool that should be developed further. Whilst its use should remain voluntary, they welcomed any expansion of coverage by countries. They agreed that Scoreboard reports should come to DGs collectively and also to the Government Interest Group of the LAC, so that it could help **promote learning** amongst Member States.

More generally, DGs recognised the value of setting national targets and having some system of benchmarking progress against other Member States. They agreed on the need to **examine further the scope for target-setting at European level**.

(5) Building an evidence base

DGs agreed that a key element in delivering solid improvement in health and safety performance was a reliable, relevant evidence base for action, against which MSs can gauge progress.

They recognised the practical and political difficulties in achieving evidence-based policy making – not least that MSs faced many problems and risks that were not yet fully understood (e.g. from biotechnologies). Those problems and risks were frequently common to many, if not all, MSs, and so DGs agreed on the **importance of coordinating research efforts** in the interests of cost-effectiveness.

DGs also agreed on the importance of **communicating** research findings **in suitable language** to the public, and using the findings sensibly. Public attitudes to risk were an important dimension in OSH policy making.

They discussed the role of the Bilbao Agency, agreeing that its main task was dissemination. This was a vital role if MSs were to exploit the rich and varied work carried out throughout the EU and to avoid reinventing the wheel.

In conclusion, DGs suggested it would be helpful to collaborate at European level in **building evidence about ‘what works?’** in MSs’ various OSH interventions.

Conclusion

Reviewing the discussions, the Chair identified an underlying theme about **the importance of working with and through others** to achieve our objectives. We therefore needed to give a great deal of thought to **communication** and to simplifying our messages.

We also needed to secure effective **complementarity** between what MSs can do individually at national level, and what is done collectively at European level. The

discussions on each theme had given some useful pointers on this.

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Health and Safety
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10 November 2005

Dear Mme Quintin,

UNITED KINGDOM PRESIDENCY HEALTH AND SAFETY EVENT – ‘THE FUTURE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE EU’ - OUTCOMES

As you know, the UK Presidency with the Commission's assistance mounted a health and safety event in Liverpool on 18-19 October 2005, aimed at identifying the key components that might form the framework for the next EU occupational safety and health strategy to run from 2007.

The second day of the event, consisting of a formal meeting of European Directors General of health and safety gave Government representatives the opportunity to consider and offer views on the shape of the new strategy. The meeting examined five themes:-

1. Mainstreaming occupational health and safety;
2. Better Regulation;
3. Targeting interventions for maximum results;
4. Setting targets to deliver outcomes;
5. Building an evidence base

The attached paper records the outcome of these discussions, and confirms the belief of Directors General that these themes should have an important place in the new strategy. It has been prepared by the UK Presidency and agreed by Austria and Finland, who will hold the Presidency after the UK.

We hope that the outcomes paper will assist the Commission in the challenge of developing the successor strategy to *'Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006'*.

The UK, Austrian and Finnish Presidencies are committed to supporting and cooperating with the Commission in this work, and the outcomes paper is the beginning of this process. We believe that a successful and workable strategy will best be delivered by close and continued working between the Commission and Member States.

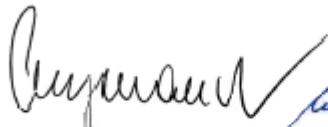
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You may also be aware that the UK, Austrian and Finnish Presidencies have agreed to cooperate closely over the coming year in the Government Interest Group (GIG) of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work. This should provide additional and valuable continuity during the development stages of the new strategy.

Finally, you will be glad to know that the whole event was a great success, attracting some 128 delegates to its first day, from across Europe and covering the spectrum of Governments, the social partners and a range of non-Governmental organisations involved in safety and health at work. Lord Philip Hunt of Kings Heath, the UK health and safety Minister, gave the keynote speech and a variety of speakers from employers, workers and elsewhere made very valuable contributions. The UK Presidency is particularly grateful for the Commission's financial support for the event and the contributions made by Bernhard Jansen, Ramon Biosca, Georges Herbillon and Antonio Cammarota.



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
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Annex 4

Brussels, 19.12.05*019946

Mr. Justin McCracken
–Acting Chief Executive –
HEALTH AND SAFETY
EXECUTIVE
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Dear Mr McCracken,

I was delighted to receive your letter of 10 November 2005 on the results of the health and safety event organised in Liverpool on 18-19 October 2005 by the UK Presidency of the Council in the framework of the formal meeting of the European Directors General of health and safety.

The Commission welcomes the results of this conference and deeply appreciates the commitment of the UK, Austrian and Finnish Presidencies to closely cooperate with and support the Commission in the challenge of developing a new Community strategy on safety and health at work.

The themes discussed during the Liverpool conference as well as the remarkable outcomes of this event will certainly help the Commission in its current exercise of evaluation of the present strategy and in the future development of a new European OSH policy strategic framework for the period 2007-2012.

It is in the spirit of such a Community strategy that all actors involved actively participate in its framing and implementation. I am firmly convinced, in this connection, that your initiative within the Government Interest Group of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work will be able to provide an appropriate framework for this process to fruitfully advance.

Yours sincerely

Odile QUINTIN

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UK Priorities for the new EU OSH Strategy 2007-2012

Endorsed by EU Directors General of OSH at Liverpool meeting on 19 October 2005

1. Putting Better Regulation at the heart of the new Strategy

- **embed better regulation principles** in EU legislation (legislation to be evidence-based; modern; easily understood; with no unnecessary red tape; enforceable; and driving real improvements in H&S)
- consider **new EU legislation** only where there is **clear evidence it is needed and a full impact assessment** available
- identify **priorities for simplifying existing EU legislation**, in light of shared concerns in Member States

2. Mainstreaming health & safety into priority areas, in particular:

- **competitiveness** agenda (good health & safety is good business)
- **public health** policies (more emphasis on occupational health and links to employability)

3. Targeting interventions for maximum results

- clear, simple **advice for SMEs**
- developing **incentives** (alongside enforcement) to improve performance

4. Setting targets to deliver outcomes

- choosing measures that match agreed priorities
- exploring scope for target setting at European level

5. Building on the evidence base

- coordinating research efforts, including on “what works”

Other Presidency events in which HSC/E have been involved

- Bill Callaghan chaired the DTI's 'High-performance workplace' conference in London on 15 September 2005;
- An HSE official acted as the chair and facilitator for one of the workshops at the DTI's 'Social Dialogue' conference in London on 17 November 2005;
- HSE officials attended DTI's 'Corporate social responsibility' conference in London on 1-2 December 2005