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**MINUTES OF THE 25TH MEETING OF THE
INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON GROUP ON RISK ASSESSMENT**

**15 MAY 2001 AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING,
29 GREAT PETER STREET, LONDON SW1P 3LW**

Present

Paul Davies	HSE (Chair)
Angela Patel	DH
Simon Pollard	EA
John Grubb	DETR
Ian Leigh	DTI
David J Hewkin	MOD
James Foreman-Peck	HMT
Mike Segal	FSA
Adrian Sayce	CAA
David Coles	OST
Joe Brown	SE
Edgar Black	MAFF
Mike De Silva	DH for David Harper
Sally Williams	CO for Mark Courtney

Apologies

David Peace	HO
Catherine Codjoe	DfEE
David Harper	DH
Havard Prosser	WO

Guests

Ruth Ingamells	CO
James Quinault	CO
Margaret Davies	DETR
Pamela Mortimer	MOD

ILGRA Secretariat

Jean Le Guen	HSE (Secretary)
Elsie Cassin	HSE (Minutes Secretary)

Advisers

Robin Foster	HSE
Laurence Golob	HSE
David Rickwood	HSE
Richard Broughton	HSE

ITEM 1: Introductions

1.0 The Chair welcomed members and introduced substitutes, guests and one new member Edgar Black, MAFF. The chair noted that all papers now indicate their openness status, and that the Secretariat aimed to put the agenda, papers and minutes on the website within 8 weeks of the meeting. He commented that, quite properly, most of the agenda items reflected the context of much Government activity on risk in the wake of, for example, publication of the interim response to the Phillips Inquiry and the handling of foot and mouth disease. A key objective for the meeting was to identify where ILGRA could best add value to work going on elsewhere.

ITEM 2: Minutes of ILGRA Meeting on 7 November 2000

2.0 The minutes were circulated to members on 23 January 2001. Amendments to paragraph 8 were received from the Cabinet Office and incorporated. The minutes were agreed.

ITEM 3: Matters Arising (ILGRA/MAY01/01)

3.0 Comments on the precautionary principle had been taken on board and a final draft would be circulated shortly. The third ILGRA report would be progressed by means of correspondence and a draft would be circulated in the next few months. The chair mentioned work in progress in ILGRA's sub-group on health risks from chemicals to develop a 'one-stop' system for the control of chemicals, and noted that a stakeholder seminar would take place in Rose Court in June.

**ITEM 4: Departmental Risk Management Frameworks (ILGRA/MAY01/02)
and Government Statement on Risk**

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ITEM 5: BSE Enquiry

1. **Lessons to be Learned from the Report of the BSE Enquiry (ILGRA/MAY01/03) & Draft HSC comments to MAFF on the Interim Response to the Report of the BSE Inquiry (Supplement to ILGRA/MAY01/03)**
2. **Risk and Public Health: addressing the concerns in the Phillips Report (ILGRA/MAY01/04)**

5.0 The chair introduced this item. He invited members to give views on which of the Phillips recommendations ILGRA should take forward. He also invited comments on the aims and objectives of the Department of Health workshop on risk issues.

5.1 Mike Segal introduced the FSA paper. He said that most of the lessons learned apply to all Departments. The traditional model of distinct processes of risk analysis, management and communication was out of date; in effect risk management embraced everything from framing the question to communicating the outcomes.

5.2 Mike De Silva introduced the Department of Health paper, which looked ahead to action in the next 6 months to tackle issues raised by Phillips. The Department of Health were conscious of a lack of a coherent and consistent approach across Departments to issues such as horizon scanning, openness, risk communication and auditing of process and outcomes. They felt that there was a need for a workshop. Mike De Silva explained that the aim of the workshop was to bring together current thinking on these issues in the context of public health with a view to fostering an agreed approach. The workshop, with around 35 participants from Departments, would take place in July. An outline agenda had been sent to members of the senior group steering the Government's response to Phillips. He sought ILGRA members' views on the purpose and aims of the workshop.

5.3 The following points were made in discussion:

- Greater openness was sometimes a question of cultural change that started with the way the issues were framed.
- The framework documents were useful tools to effect change on, for example, ensuring that stakeholders are engaged throughout the process of decision-making.
- There was a need for Departments to update and expand their approaches to persuading industry to proactively address risks.
- There was also more scope for Departments to share good practice such as the DH training initiative to equip policy makers with key skills on risk.
- The workshop was one means of sharing good practice. However, participants should be sufficiently senior to take away the lessons learnt and effect change within Departments.
- The agenda could either range widely and follow up in a subsequent workshop, or focus on specific issues and aim to secure agreement on the way forward.
- The workshop could be followed by another bringing in key outside players.

5.5 The chair summarised the discussions. He noted that ILGRA had come to a crossroads. The Liaison Group had been persuasive and influential as an informal body; its initiatives such as framework documents had been picked up by Cabinet Office. Nevertheless, there was a need to reconsider its remit and modus operandi after the election in the context of any machinery of Government changes and to see what role ILGRA should play in the implementation of recommendations made in influential reports such as the Phillips Inquiry.

Action:

1. **Members to let the Secretariat know their views on further issues to include in ILGRA's future work programme.**
2. **Members to reflect on any necessary changes to the remit and modus operandi of ILGRA in the light of Phillips and any changes in Government machinery after the election.**

ITEM 6: Improving Collaboration in Managing 'Interdepartmental Risk'
(ILGRA/MAY01/06)

6.0 Robin Foster introduced the paper by noting that, in the context of foot and mouth disease, political commentators had pointed up that Whitehall had to learn broader lessons of joined-up working. The paper invited consideration of any new/improved mechanisms to address risks that spanned more than one Department.

6.1 The following points were made in discussion:

- New crises are inevitably different from previous ones; so existing mechanisms are unlikely to be well suited to the immediate need.
- Departments had to be better at horizon scanning to pick up issues well before crises ensued.
- ILGRA's research on social amplification promised tools to identify risk issues with potential for high political profile unless appropriately managed.
- collaboration between Departments was essential – holistic risk management was now even more important than management of individual hazards.

- New/improved mechanisms had to secure Departmental cooperation and effect risk trade-offs.
- Mechanisms had to be set up in advance, though there was a resource cost in maintaining networks. There may also be a need to develop a different culture that transcended ownership of specific hazards. Some work was in hand centrally.

6.2 The chair summarised the discussion and suggested that ILGRA's third report should bring out this important issue, though responsibility to put new/improved mechanisms in place lay elsewhere.

Action:

Secretariat to include in ILGRA's draft third report the need for suitable coordination mechanisms.

ITEM 7: Promoting Responsibility for Risk Management (ILGRA/MAY01/06)

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ITEM 8

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ITEM 9: Working together on Risk Issues across Government – Progress and Suggestions for the Way Forward (ILGRA/MAY01/08)

9.0 Members agreed that most of the issues in this paper had already been covered in discussion.

Action:

Members to help shape ILGRA's future work programme by sending written comments to the Secretariat by 29 June 2001.

ITEM 10: Any other business

10.0 The chair mentioned Tom Horlick-Jones's letter asking for observer status at ILGRA meetings. In discussion members distinguished the role and remit of a body such as ILGRA from, for example, the FSA Board (which holds open meetings)

and noted that many academics and others with an interest in risk could in future seek observer status. This weighed against agreeing to this specific request. This decision would, however, be reviewed in the context of consideration of ILGRA's future role.

Action:

Secretariat to reply to Tom Horlick-Jones.