

**SOC-2 "Health & Safety"
THURSDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 2015, BRUSSELS**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1. Welcome and introduction

Mrs. Cristina Garcia Herguedas (ES-CNC), Chairwoman of SOC-2, welcomes the participants and asks each one to briefly present him/herself.

The participants express their appreciation for the document "Notes on the Agenda" which was circulated prior to the meeting with the working documents, as it helps to better prepare the discussions on each item on the agenda.

2. Approval of the minutes of the previous SOC-2 meeting held on 4/3/2015

The minutes of the previous meeting are approved without any modification.

3. Psycho-social risks at the workplace : Best practices at the national level

Mrs. Cristina Garcia Herguedas (ES-CNC) reminds that psycho-social risks (or "stress") at the workplace is a complex topic, with difficulties in separating the work-related factors from the private/personal ones, which is more and more present amongst the EU social priorities. In previous SOC-2 meetings we had agreed to present and discuss best practice examples of national initiatives regarding "stress" at the workplace in the construction sector.

The Irish colleagues sent to FIEC a brochure about an initiative entitled "Mind our workers" regarding the problem of suicide in the construction sector. A copy of the brochure is available amongst the working documents of the meeting and on the FIEC website.

Mrs. Veronika Jakl, an Austrian work psychologist, presents how the topic has been addressed at the national level within the construction sector, with the involvement of the social partners (*a copy of her presentation is attached to these minutes*). Some of the messages that she highlighted are :

- In Austria since 2013 there is a legislation that explicitly imposes to include "stress" in the risk-assessment.
- Digitalisation of the economy has contributed to an increase of stress by accelerating the speed at which information is circulating and people expect quick answers.
- The initiative in Austria started within the company Porr with a small pilot project and was then extended to cover the whole sector.
- Construction is characterised by mobile workplaces, small teams and with people living near the worksite and therefore the "usual" measuring tools are inadequate and specific tools need to be put in place.
- The project showed that there is also a need to involve the customer/client.
- The methodology used for the project is also applicable to SMEs in which changes are often easier and quicker because of less hierarchical levels.
- In order to separate the work-related factors from the personal ones it is crucial to approach the issue from an "input" (constraints from work organisation, clients' pressure, etc.) and "output" (for ex : does not sleep well, pain in the neck, etc.) perspective. The focus must be on the "input" part, which is the one related to the work place and environment.

During the discussions the participants indicate the following topics as possible joint actions with the EFBWW in the framework of our Social Dialogue :

- 1) Share useful methodologies (exchange of best practices)
- 2) Elaborate a guide for workers and employers
- 3) Elaborate a European basic risk-assessment tool tailored for the construction industry
- 4) Organise a FIEC-EFBWW workshop.

4. European Commission's assessment of the EU H&S legislation ("COWI study")

Mr. Campogrande briefly presents the main outcome of the "COWI study", which was launched by the European Commission in order to assess all the existing EU legislation on H&S, to check its efficiency and consistency and also to determine whether or not changes or new legislation is needed.

This study is composed by an overall view and by more than 20 more specific assessments/evaluations/recommendations for each piece of legislation. The ones more closely related to the construction sector ("Mobile sites" directive, "Carcinogens" directive, "Chemical agents" directive) have been circulated amongst FIEC member federations. On this basis the European Commission will take new initiatives, some of them legislative.

The participants did not raise any particular issue regarding these studies and ask to circulate also the specific study on the "Screen/displays" directive.

The FIEC secretariat will follow the developments of new initiatives related to these studies and will inform the member federations accordingly, in order to define the possible actions to be undertaken.

5. "Respirable Crystalline Silica" (RCS)

Mr. Campogrande explains that the Commission's work on this issue has been slowed down because of the study mentioned under item 4 here above (the "Carcinogens" directive was also included in the scope of the overall assessment) but new developments are expected following the finalisation of the COWI report.

According to the latest information available it seems that the Commission intends to amend the "Carcinogens" directive in 2 different phases, in order to include within its scope 2 different sets of substances, during 2016. It is likely that RCS would be included in the first phase, in the first half of the year.

The members of SOC-2 are asked to check and gather information regarding these developments from their national representatives in the Advisory Committee on H&S (*Note : the list of members can be requested at the FIEC secretariat*).

6. Social Dialogue work programme

FIEC and EFBWW need to finalise the new Social Dialogue work programme for the period 2016-2019 by the end of the year. A preliminary draft was sent to the EFBWW and the feedback/comments/suggestions received have been included in the working documents circulated for the meeting. Most of the comments/proposals provided by the EFBWW concern mainly the parts of the work programme related to H&S matters.

The outcome of the discussions is the following :

- Page 7 : EFBWW should clarify what is meant with "social conditions", as the wording is vague.
- Page 8, item b : specify that it is the organisation of the worksite "for the safe use of machines".
- Page 9 : The new proposed wording for item d) is approved.

- Page 9 : the item “Asbestos” should be deleted as it is not considered as a priority topic within FIEC and a new paragraph should be added on page 7, before item a), mentioning the joint actions undertaken so far and that a follow-up of these actions will be defined.
- Page 10, item f) : change “can” into “may” (...may introduce new hazards...) and “evident” into “expected” (...it is expected that this technology...).
- Page 10, “Collaboration with OSHA” : insert here a paragraph on the “ageing of workforce”.

The other changes proposed by the EFBWW are accepted.

The bullet point mentioned here above will be presented and discussed with the EFBWW.

A final draft version of the work programme will be circulated for approval as soon as the EFBWW has provided its feedback on FIEC’s proposals.

7. Asbestos

Following the joint FIEC-EFBWW initiative which produced the “Information modules on Asbestos”, both organisations have been involved, indirectly as support to the 2 co-rapporteurs, in the elaboration of a report from the European Economic and Social Committee.

The report was adopted on 18/2/2015 and circulated to all the member federations. A copy of the report is amongst the working documents for the meeting.

As a follow up, the EFBWW asked FIEC to co-sign a letter to be addressed to the European Commission with the aim of asking the setting up, within the European Commission, of a “task group” in order to better coordinate the initiatives that depend from different internal services (H&S from DG EMPL, “energy efficiency” from DG GROW and DG ENVI, waste from DG ENVI, etc.). A copy of this draft letter was circulated amongst the working documents for the meeting.

As a conclusion of the discussions the participants consider that the issue of “Asbestos” is not a priority for FIEC and therefore, although it is important to remain pro-active on this issue, FIEC should not co-sign the letter.

8. H&S standards for earth-moving machinery (FIEC-EFBWW Working Group)

A joint FIEC-EFBWW project, in cooperation with the CECE (the EU association of equipment manufacturers), on the issue of “Earth moving machines” was submitted to the European Commission during the summer and at the moment of the meeting it was still being assessed.

The final description of the project is available amongst the working documents for the meeting.

However, on the basis of the answer from the Commission it is important to discuss and decide how to organise the involvement of FIEC in the project (members of the Steering Group, suggestions for the workshops, etc.), in order to allow the project to start as soon as possible.

The participants following participants are willing to represent FIEC in the Steering Group that will monitor the project :

- Ricardo Cortes (ES-CNC)
- Martin Sonnberger (AT-BI Bau/EFFC)
- Christian Lesouef (FR-FNTP), not present but provided the information orally.

Mr. Campogrande reminds that the budget of the project foresees the reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs for 2 FIEC representatives only.

9. Miscellaneous

- Mr. Cortes (ES-CNC) indicates that 1 meeting per year only is not enough and therefore FIEC should investigate the possibility of organising video-conferences every 2-3 months on specific topics, as a complement of the current meetings.
- Mr. Campogrande reminds the participants about the request of the EFFC (European Federation of Foundation Contractors), an associate member of FIEC, to undertake a joint initiative for a better EU-wide recognition of the qualifications for "pile rig" operators. One of the possibilities envisaged would be to allow the possibility to use a licence in another member state for a temporary period (3-6 months) beyond which the operator would then need to fulfil the national training required. The participants agree to continue the discussions on this topic with the EFFC.

10. Next meetings

The next meetings will take place on **Wednesday 9th March 2016**:

- SOC-2 in the morning
 - Social Dialogue H&S in the afternoon
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