

Minutes of the NEW OSH ERA Final Conference, 25th – 26th February, Berlin

### **First Day of the Conference:**

#### **14:00 – 14:30 Opening of the Final Conference by Kai Schäfer (BMAS, Germany), Ulrich Riese (BAuA, Germany) and Kai Savolainen (FIOH, Finland):**

Kai Schäfer, representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, gives a short overview of the historical development of the Ministry and the development of OSH affairs. His speech goes to the crisis and the regulation of short time work. The Ministry's Motto is to better hold the staff than to lay off. So they initiated and extended the short time work support. His speech ends with giving compliments to NEW OSH ERA and his great influence to some political procedures.

Ulrich Riese, head of division "Strategy and Programmes" at BAuA, begins his speak with saying that he does not want to celebrate the end of the project as there is some hope that there will be continuation. After having given an overview of the development of NEW OSH ERA, he presents the new research and development structure of BAuA. The project fits very well into the research goals of BAuA so that he stresses the happiness of BAuA to participate in NEW OSH ERA. He hopes very much that the network will continue. He is optimistic that in the next days a way will be found to continue NEW OSH ERA.

Kai Savolainen as the project coordinator expresses his thanks to the speakers, to the organisers and all the participants. He speaks about some sadness as NEW OSH ERA will end. He says that the conference will serve to look behind, to make an evaluation about a project which has going on for four years and to look beyond: ways have to be found to increase the commitment and to continue NEW OSH ERA.

#### **14:30 – 15:10 Summary of the achievements of the NEW OSH ERA, Kai Savolainen (FIOH, Finland)**

First Kai Savolainen shows the development of the beginning of NEW OSH. At the beginning objectives were defined – very ambitious objectives. It was clear, that not all objectives could have been reached within four years. But the main achievements of NEW OSH ERA are:

- Report on national OSH research landscape and management;
- Report on new opportunities in Osh research,
- A foresight study on OSH research,
- Memorandum of Common Understanding,
- The implementation of a joint call and the forum on new and emerging risks at work.

(see presentation)

## **15:40 - 16:20 Joint Calls, Carin Håkansta, Call Secretariat (FAS, Sweden)**

Carin Håkansta gives a short overview of the procedure of the implementation of the call and the handling with the proposal and the evaluation procedure. (see presentation)

At the end of the presentation she is happy to report on some news of the Consortium: Not only PSYRES and RE-SU-LEAD, but also WORK-IPD will be funded.

### **Short Reports of the funding organisations:**

Joachim Hermann, DGUV:

He stresses that in the consortium it took much time to come to a common procedure. But it was worth it as all learned from each other. A challenge was to inform the stakeholder and management in order to get a certain commitment to fund the project. Thanks to the process before, they managed to get the commitment.

Ilka Tahvanainen

Even summer holidays were stopped due to much work with the organisation of the call. But he described the work as very enjoyable. It was great to see how different countries forwarded the project idea. New groups were built up joining their data. The network is growing and yet it is not clear how far it will extend. The research community reported that the procedure developed for the call was very suitable.

Henrietta Orban

Henrietta explains that the internal procedure within BAuA was hard (very bureaucratic). It was hard to communicate the complex structure of the call construction. BAuA scientists were involved from the beginning on so that the call topic fits perfectly into BAuA's research plan.

Eric Van Luijk

Eric explains that for the Dutch ministry such a project as NEW OSH ERA with its international and long-term dimension was a new experience and an adventure.

On the one hand of course international research is necessary but European cooperation is about to fail as the process is very slow; the budget is never made on time. Fortunately the project could be made in time. This saved the future cooperation! He stresses that it would be a shame if the project cannot continue!

Maria Castriotta, ISPESL

The commitment of ISPESL was very convincing since the beginning. The project was a big challenge, a very positive experience but some procedures were difficult – especially to have a common procedure. She explained that they learned how to go on in a European way. There were high interest about the calls in Italy – many questions came to ISPESL. At the end ISPESL had no projects to fund as the Italian projects were not part of successful consortia. She praises the work of the evaluation panel and she is convinced that the best projects have been funded!

One question is raised concerning the Call secretariat: How important was the Call secretariat? There was a consensus on the answer that the work done by the Call secretariat was very important. They had a lot of work with many questions to be coordinated. The members of the funding organisations stated that they did excellent work.

## **16:20 - 17:00 Presentation of the funded research projects**

PSYRES by Catelijne Joling (TNO, NL)

RE-SU-LEAD by Thomas Rigotti (University Leipzig, DE)

At the conference two successful proposers to the first Joint Call present their future projects.

Cateljne Joling from TNO presents the project PSYRES (Psychological health and well being in restructuring: key effects and mechanisms). The project will be elaborated with a consortium from Finland, Denmark and Poland and The Netherlands. The project will be coordinated by TNO.

She presents the single work packages, the aims and the different steps of the project and the expected effects on OSH (see presentation).

Questions are raised on the issue of how the applicant was experiencing the application procedure. The answer was that the procedure was very clear. They appreciated the two stage procedure. The financing structure was quite complex. It was difficult to find partners fitting in the NEW OSH ERA funding scheme. In other calls the formal structure is usually very clear. There was a kind of uncertainty about this issue.

Another question is raised on the budget: Will it be enough for the project? The answer is that the budget is quite realistic.

The final question is about on how to contact the companies which are in restructuring process. Do you have already contacts? What is the procedure? The answer is that TNO is not only a research institute but also a consulting institute. TNO will use the contacts they have already out of their networks, although it is not easy to do research in companies with an ongoing restructuring process.

The other successful project is presented by Thomas Rigotti, a member of the research group of RE-SU-LEAD-Rewarding and Sustainable health-promoting LEADership.

The Consortium Partners are: University of Leipzig (Germany), University of Tampere, (Finland) and the Mälardalen University (Sweden).

He presents the different goals and the procedure within the project (see presentation).

Here as well, a question was raised concerning the application process: this consortium also highly appreciated the two stage process. The internet platform was clearly structured and the handling was easy. He mentioned that the remarks of the reviewers were too concise so that they had not the opportunity to learn so much from the feed-back.

Finally a general question was raised: Who is the third consortium of successful applicants who got the funding of the joint call?

The name of the successful project is “WORK-IPD” (Work-related psychosocial factors and health in subgroups: Individual-participant-data meta-analysis). The project coordinator will be FIOH in Finland. The partners are coming from Sweden, Germany, Denmark, France and UK.

## **Second Day of the Conference:**

### **09:00 – 10:30 ERA-NET Action in FP7, Zsuzsa König (DG RTD)**

The first presentation is given by Zsuzsa König from the European Commission. She presents the ERA-Net Action in FP7 and FP6. She talks about the thinking behind of the ERA-Nets and explains why the Commission funds ERA-Nets. A new instrument in FP7 is ERA-Net Plus. The Commission gives co-funding for a joint call (up to 33% of the total amount). Now the main process is the Joint Programming activity. The Commission carried out a study about FP6 ERA-Nets: Basically all the member states participate. The commission sees the future of ERA-Nets as a self sustained continuation.  
(See presentation)

The first comment to the presentation is done by Kai Savolainen: He has visited the DG Health and talked there to a Scientific Officer who said that ERA-Nets have a low priority. The Scientific Officer of course cannot speak on behalf of other DGs, but he gave the recommendation to give up the horizontal approach and go for research funding. The answer by Zsuzsa König is that the implementation of the ERA-NET scheme has been decentralised in FP7. The thematic Directorates launch a call for the ERA-NET action in their field, and implement the FP7 contracts. There is no more horizontal call foreseen. Any continuation of a project with financial support from DG RTD has to be seen with the relevant services and the Programme Committee of the Member States.

### **REPORT from the WORK-IN-NET ERA-NET regarding chances for continuation of the network(s), Claudio Zettel (PT-DLR, Germany)**

Claudio Zettel is member of the NEW OSH ERA and the coordinator of another ERA-Net which is called WORK-IN-NET. In his presentation he gives information about the procedures in this ERA-Net. He reports about launching a call, evaluation procedures, ups and downs (e.g. they suffered a lot from the close down of three important institutes working on work-oriented innovation in Europe, all of them being involved in the consortium).  
(see the presentation).

The questions raised to Claudio Zettel are about the differences in NEW OSH ERA and WORK-IN-NET concerning the application and evaluation procedures. Every participant in the joint call used the respective national or regional application forms. Proposals were submitted to the national/regional funder together with an English summary for WORK-IN-NET. The electronic proposal submission system EPSS was not used. The evaluation process happened on national/regional level in accordance with national/regional rules and participation of international WORK-IN-NET experts in the selection process.

How did they guarantee that the consortium worked together? Project proposals had to already include international cooperation, after successful application different meetings were organized to detail cooperation and support networking among all projects of this joint programme.

## **Vision of PEROSH and EU-OSHA on the future Palle Orbaek (PEROSH) and Kate Palmer (EU-OSHA)**

Palle Orbaek shows in his presentation the visions of PEROSH and the future. He explains general and historical issues about PEROSH. He stresses that PEROSH is willing to support the development of joined action projects in the spirit of NEW OSH ERA. There is a substantial overlap between the researchers in the two networks and he hopes for more research cooperation in the future.

(see presentation)

KATE PALMER from the EU-OSHA explains in her presentation the Agency's role in NEW OSH ERA, their work so far and what remains to be done. She stresses that the Agency is committed to support the continuation of NEW OSH ERA. There is still a lot of work which has to be done together.

(see presentation)

## **11:00 – 12:20 Endorsement of the Action Plan by Kai Savolainen (FIOH, Finland)**

In the last section of the conference Kai Savolainen gives an insight in the future Action Plan of NEW OSH ERA. The funding of the project NEW OSH ERA ends by the end of March and ways have to be found how the NEW OSH ERA actors become active player at the Community level. To do so, leadership commitment is absolutely necessary.

There are three issues in the action plan:

- The Agency commits itself to continue the “FORUM on NEW and EMERGING RISKS AT WORK”. Many organisations committed to support the Agency in this Activity. BAuA, CIOP-PIB, DGUV, FIOH, FPS Employment, ISPESL, OMFI, PT-DLR
- The continuation of transnational OSH research funding e.g. launching joint calls.
- Collaboration within PEROSH in joint research projects; furthermore PEROSH continues the coordination of OSH research via pooling of resources and sharing of knowledge across member institutions as well as developing joint research projects.

(see action plan)

Kai Savolainen asks for comments and questions on the action plan:

The question was raised: When will there be a proceeding in signing the action plan?

The answer was that the signing cannot take place at the conference but at the Member Institutes after the Final Conference.

A representative from the Finnish Ministry praises the initiatives that have been taken by NEW OSH ERA. He is happy to recommend to the ministry to sign the Action plan but more Member States should be involved in the action!

The discussion comes to the role of the DG Employment who will be an important partner to be included. The question is raised if anybody has talked to the DG Employment and who would be the partner to talk to? The answer is that nobody has been in contact with the DG

Employment so far but Zsuzsa König will help to find the relevant unit. She will give the names of the contact persons to Kai Savolainen.

Another suggestion is to bring the following ERA-Nets together: NEW OSH ERA, WORK-IN-ERA and AGE ERA. This new ERA-Net consisting of three groups would have a stronger voice than one ERA-Net alone. This should not be included in the action plan but to be taken as one of the first measures.

Furthermore, the question is raised on the connection between the NEW OSH ERA and the Community Strategy 2020. NEW OSH ERA has sent short but good contribution to the process. In 2010 there will be a reaction to all contributions. The question came up, what will be included in the Action plan of the strategy? The answer to this is that they will have a look at the strategy 2020 and then to see how the action plans fits and then proposals can be done.

A representative from Greece asks how the Greek institute will be integrated in the Action Plan. They are neither members of PEROSH nor a funding institution. They can sign the plan but they are not really in the networks. The answer is that Greece can mainly contribute to the Forum. This means for example: to suggest speakers, to think about key target groups, etc.

The last question is about how the action plan will be implemented:

Concerning the first action the Agency will coordinate the activity (first action). The implementation of the second action will depend on the engagement of the funding organisation (e.g. to launch new calls, to collect ideas, priorities etc.). Regarding the third action, PEROSH has to become active.

The Conference is ending by words through the conference thanking the organizers for the perfect organization of the conference and all the participants for the successful project.