European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work

Final Report

Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

May 2007

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The external evaluation of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (the 'Agency') was carried out by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES) in 2006/07. This document contains a summary of the key conclusions and recommendations from the final report.

1.   Study Aims

The objectives of this evaluation were, in summary, to evaluate the focal points (FOPs) and their network's contribution to the performance of the Agency in achieving its mission. The more specific aims were to:

- Assess the extent to which the activities of each focal point and its network, in particular the social partners, have met the objectives in the document, '**Preparing for Enlargement. Proposal for a Second Generation Agency Network'**;

- Assess the **Agency's role** in supporting the focal points' and their networks' activities;

- Assess the contribution of the focal points and their networks taken as one to the **efficiency and effectiveness** of the Agency's activities.

- Assess the **overall impact** of Agency activities.

- Provide **conclusions and recommendations** to help develop and optimise future Agency activities.

It should be stressed that the primary purpose of the assignment was to evaluate the contribution of the FOPs and their national networks to helping the Agency to achieve its mission, rather than undertaking an overall evaluation of the Agency itself.

As with any evaluation, this exercise fulfils two basic purposes – examining past experience and achievements, and, secondly, helping to define future priorities. The results of the evaluation are intended to help the Agency and its Board/Bureau to decide on the future organisation of the FOP network – including the Agency's role in supporting their work – so as to maximise results and impacts, efficiency and effectiveness.

The evaluation, which was carried out during the second half of 2006 and early 2007, involved wide-ranging research. This included face-to-face interviews with Governing Board Members, Commission officials, all EU25 National Focal Points (FOPs) and many network partners, and Agency staff. In addition, a number of surveys were undertaken covering Board Members, FOPs, network partners and end users of the Agency's products and services. The survey of end users elicited a response from 771 organisations and individuals. Last but not least, other EU-supported agencies were interviewed to enable some aspects of EU-OSHA's activities and organisation to be compared.

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2. Overall Conclusions

1. It is clear from the evaluation that the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is very highly regarded as a source of information in Europe on OSH issues. Since its establishment, it has done much to ensure that the profile of OSH is prominent in both EU and national policies and in helping to promote better practices 'on the ground'. The research feedback is generally positive with regard to the types of activities promoted by the Agency and their relevance to target groups, the way in which activities are delivered and the impacts achieved.

2. The FOPs and their networks have played a very important role in helping the Agency to achieve positive outcomes. FOPs are an essential mechanism through which the Agency can promote its mission. However, the research suggests that following EU enlargement it has become more difficult in many respects to maintain a close relationship with the FOP network. But there are a number of practical steps that could be taken to ensure that the relationship with FOPs is strengthened.

3. The objectives set out in 'Preparing for Enlargement - Proposal for a Second Generation Agency Network' have either been or are being achieved. In summary, it can be said that whilst good progress has been made, there is still some way to go before the objectives set out in this strategy are fully met. Capacity building in the EU10 countries remains a key priority.

4. Looking ahead, consideration needs to be given to the appropriate mix of delivery methods – decentralized via the FOP network/more centralized with an emphasis on EU level activities. With available resources being spread more thinly across EU Member States, there is a need to develop ways of delivering OSH support actions – in both EU10+2 and EU15 countries - that ensures that the more limited resources do not jeopardize the achievement of strategic aims. Whilst the adoption of more centralized delivery mechanisms may provide part of the solution, the research suggests that there is also a need, at a national level, to strengthen the FOP network and their supporting networks. The potential contribution of national networks to the promotion of the Agency's objectives is not at present being fully exploited.

5. Overall, the Agency demonstrates high European added value and the evaluation does not point to the need for fundamental changes to the Agency's objectives or how promotes its mission. European added value lies in reinforcing and adding credibility to national OSH promotion, economies of scale, capacity building and strengthening tripartitism, and improving an understanding of OSH issues by adding a European dimension to the picture at a national level. Fundamental changes are not needed and it is more a question of fine-tuning certain aspects of the Agency's operations.

3. Role of National Focal Points

6. The role of FOPs and their capacity to promote the Agency's mission needs to be seen against the backdrop of national OSH structures and traditions. As Section 3 of this report has shown, in some countries responsibility for OSH is centralised in national

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administrations or in specialized agencies/institutes but elsewhere responsibility for OSH is often shared at a national level by different government departments or has been devolved to regional authorities. A further factor influencing the FOP function is changing host structures. In a number of countries, responsibility for OSH (and the FOP host structures) has been transferred from one government department to another, often following elections. Several examples are given in the report of where a lack of continuity in OSH structures and resourcing has had a negative impact on the FOP function. Equally, in some countries, FOP structures have provided an important element of continuity in a constantly changing institutional environment.

7. **In general, the support provided by national authorities and host organisations to FOPs is seen as adequate.** Almost half (48%) of FOPs surveyed indicated that their relationship with national authorities is 'excellent' with the remainder being broadly satisfied. As highlighted in Section 3, there are not surprisingly circumstances on a day-to-day basis in which it is difficult for FOPs to combine commitments to the Agency with those to their host organisations, but this situation is inevitable and there is probably very little that can be done to avoid it beyond improving time management. More fundamental is the question of whether FOPs have sufficient financial and human resources to perform their function effectively. The evaluation suggests a very mixed picture in this respect.

8. **On average, the individuals responsible for the FOP function spend around half their time on Agency-related tasks but this varies considerably from one country to another.** Overall, European Week campaigns are the most time-consuming activity for the FOPs, taking up on average just over a third of the time available. Other activities which take up a considerable amount of time are networking, website management and especially the checking of translations.

9. **FOPs have a key role in providing the information required by the Agency to define its work programme and strategy, and in ensuring that the Agency's aims are aligned with national priorities.** In most cases, FOPs are part of the national administrations and therefore relatively well-placed to fulfill this role. However, some challenges can arise for the FOPs if national plans diverge from the Agency plans. The Agency undertakes consultations with the FOPs to minimize these situations as much as possible, but striking a balance between the national priorities of the EU's 25 (and now, 27) Member States has not always been possible. Indeed, since the enlargement of the network, it has become increasingly difficult to ensure that the Agency's priorities always coincide with national ones. Closer consultation between FOPs and the Board/Bureau would improve communication but, equally, the support of host organisations and national networks generally is critical to help identify priorities in the first place.

4. Role of National Networks

10. **Network partners also have an important function in enabling FOPs to understand the needs of workplaces and other end users.** FOPs are not usually in direct contact with the workplaces, and the feedback of social partners who are more directly engaged with workplaces, is invaluable in designing and targeting relevant outputs in an

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appropriate way. Often employers' organisations, and trade unions, are relied upon to provide this sort of information. However, the commitment of these kinds of organisations is often weak. The potential contribution of the FOPs and network partners to defining Agency priorities and target groups is currently not being fully exploited. In the survey, 72% of FOPs said that there was sufficient opportunities to make an input to defining the Agency's strategy but a significant minority (20%) argued this was not the case (the rest did not offer an opinion.

11. The extent to which FOPs are supported by network partners is also critical to successful delivery of the Agency's objectives. Whilst 76% of FOPs stated they had an 'excellent' relationship with national authorities, and likewise with social partners (62%), the proportion saying this was so with OSH professionals and universities was much lower (50% and 56% respectively). The role of network partners is important in providing a 'multiplier' mechanism through which OSH promotional efforts can be channeled to reach target groups. FOPs generally had a more positive view of the relationship than network partners.

The situation in different EU Member States varies considerably in this respect. In some countries, there a long tradition of joint working between social partners and strong networks generally through which OSH can be promoted. Elsewhere, including most of the EU10 Member States, these structures are still very much in the process of being developed. Indeed, in many of these countries (and several 'old' Member States), our research suggests that it is the FOP function itself that is acting as a catalyst and driver for the development of networks. Another factor influencing the capacity of national networks to deliver Agency priorities is the extent of centralization/decentralization in governmental structures generally.

Recommendations - National Networks

- Board members should be encouraged to participate in network meetings. This is already the case in some countries but not in others. Participation in these meetings would help to improve communication between the Agency and network partners, and visa-versa, and would underline the commitment to strengthening national networks. At the same time, more emphasis should be placed by FOPs on communicating more proactively with Board members (perhaps supported by an electronic newsletter).

- Ways of encouraging the further engagement of network partners should also be investigated. To this end, the Agency should consider organising or participating in national events attended by network partners. There should also be more emphasis on identifying and sharing good practices with regard to developing national networks.

- The Agency and FOPs should extend networking beyond social partners and others already engaged to include collaboration with other national and EU-supported bodies (Euro-Info-Centres, Innovation Relay Centres and other networks that have contact with SMEs).

- Consideration should be given to doing more to secure the involvement of private sector organisations (e.g. workplace health promotion bodies) in national activities, particularly in the organisation of European Week campaigns. This could provide the companies concerned with useful publicity as well as additional resource for FOPs.

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5. Key Agency Initiatives

12. A key FOP function is to help organise and promote the European Week (EW) campaigns. An important question is whether the campaigns should be essentially sector-focused or thematically orientated. The EWs are a key method of reaching high risk sectors which the new Community Strategy for 2007-2012 emphasises should be the Agency's primary target group. With a sector-based approach, key social/network partners whose support is needed to run an effective campaign can be more easily identified. Similarly, the limited scope of a sector-based campaign means that it should be possible to focus efforts more and thereby achieve greater impacts. On the other hand, a thematically-orientated EW campaign has wider relevance, is more inclusive in terms of network partners and does not preclude sector-specific actions.

13. At present, the annual cycle of European Week campaigns makes it difficult to maximise impacts. Running the campaign on a yearly basis has benefits in that, for example, it encourages a certain momentum in the organisation of campaigns which helps to raise their profile. However, difficulties have been encountered with the annual campaign cycle in terms of organisation, as well as the lack of time available for preparation and follow-up of campaign results, and the overlap between the end of one European Week and the beginning of the next one.

14. The Healthy Workplace Initiative (HWI) exemplifies a more centralized approach and is one possible model for campaigning activities generally. Organising activities in a centralised manner should be more cost-effective with scope to maximize economies of scale and to streamline administrative tasks.

Recommendations – European Week Campaigns and HWI

- Future European Weeks should be primarily a theme-based but include a sectoral focus. How precisely this is done should be left to FOPs so as to take account of situations in different countries but the Agency should provide overall guidelines.

- Consideration should be given to running the EW campaign over a two-year period. This could help to overcome difficulties currently faced with the campaign organisation as well as ensuring that a particular theme is sufficiently followed up. The first year could be devoted to promoting of the overall campaign theme with the second year then focusing on particular sectors and high risk target groups.

- Closer collaboration with SLIC campaigns should be encouraged, so as to ensure that there are no overlaps, and that possible synergies can be exploited.

- The approach being adopted to European Week 2007, offering FOPs the option of centralized support along the lines of the HWI or the FOP subsidy for decentralized national activities, is to be welcomed. It will be important to evaluate the advantages (and any disadvantages) of the differing approaches as a basis for deciding on the most appropriate campaigning approach in the future.

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15. The amount of time spent by FOPs on translation tasks is disproportionate with the service being provided by the Translation Centre being heavily criticised. There are considerable differences between the amounts of time spent by different FOPs on

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translation tasks. Some spend no time on this at all whereas in other cases this can take up 50% of their time. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, there seem to be differences in the quality of the translated materials received by FOPs in different countries, which means that some have more work to do in checking documents than others. Secondly, differences exist in how some FOPs tackle translation tasks (in particular, some FOPs are able to share this work with other FOPs where there is a common language). Last but not least, some host institutions have translation services to carry out the work so that the FOP does not spend as much time on this him/herself. Overall, the quality of work undertaken by the Translation Centre is now improving although it is still seen by most FOPs to be unsatisfactory.

Recommendations – Translation of Agency Materials

- The possibility of using local translation services should be explored, although it is recognised that the Agency's Regulation states that the Translation Centre should be used.

- Closer contacts between the Translation Centre and the FOPs should be encouraged so as to ensure that FOPs views and advice on terminology in national languages can be taken into account at the earliest stage possible. There are several examples of where this is already happening and the outcome has improved the quality of translations.

- There should be increased discretion at a national level to decide which Agency materials to translate. This function could be undertaken by Board Members, or by FOPs in consultation with network members, or jointly by all three parties. However, there is a strong argument for some core materials, such as Fact Sheets to always be translated by the Agency.

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6. Networking Between National Focal Points

16. The extent of networking between FOPs is difficult to gauge, partly due to the many forms that it takes. Cooperation between FOPs can be broadly divided into two types: joint working on particular tasks (e.g. translation of European Week campaign materials) and, secondly, and more informal and less focused networking. The extent of this latter type of networking between FOPs is particularly difficult to gauge. Overall, there is a very mixed picture - networking between FOPs is quite well developed in some cases, especially where it focuses on practical tasks, but not systematic or well developed in other cases. Differing OSH frameworks and practices are an important factor that influences the extent of networking. In particular, where these practices are relatively strong, there is less incentive to develop cross-border links although most FOPs recognize that they have a role to play in transferring know-how

17. The sharing of good practices, joint working on translation tasks and the strengthening of the FOP function are particularly important benefits of this cooperation. Where cooperation does take place it is mostly in connection with translation

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tasks. There are many examples of collaboration on the translation of Agency materials (e.g. between Austria/Germany, Belgium/France, and brochures produced in Poland and Sweden have been translated and reprinted in Lithuania and Estonia respectively). Other FOPs recognise that potential for this kind of collaboration exists, but is not fully taken advantage of it. The sharing of good practices is also an important feature of FOP networking.

Recommendations – Networking Between FOPs

- It would help to reintroduce the practice whereby FOPs hold a meeting on their own to discuss issues of common concern. This would make it easier for FOPs to agree on the issues to be discussed with the Agency and to communicate messages more clearly.

- Consideration should be given to holding FOP meetings at different locations around Europe, perhaps on an alternating basis so that Bilbao continues to be the main venue but every other meeting is held somewhere else. One possibility would be for FOPs whose country holds the EU Presidency to host these sessions. The advantage of this approach would be twofold: firstly, it would strengthen networking between FOPs and enable them to learn more about each others' ways of operating; and, secondly, it would be a symbolic gesture suggesting a more equal partnership with the Agency.

- Campaigning actions taking place across countries, for example within the context of the European Week, collaboration between FOPs on joint initiatives and sharing good practices, should be encouraged and supported.

- The Agency should facilitate regional meetings and 'study visits' between countries. The results should be presented or discussed at FOP meetings and disseminated more widely. Details of joint initiatives, collaboration to produce materials, or in the organisation of campaigns, could be disseminated through the Extranet, for example.

- Greater use should be made of ICT to strengthen the relationship with and between FOPs. In particular, the Extranet could be developed so that there is increased scope for 'virtual' networking.

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7.   Relationship between the Agency and FOPs

Terms of reference: Assess the Agency's role in supporting the focal points' and their networks' activities.

18. Feedback on the Cooperation Agreement as a framework for joint working between the Agency and FOPs is generally favourable. According to the survey feedback, most FOPs (84%) see the Cooperation Agreement as an appropriate framework and almost two thirds (64%) also argued that sufficient opportunities existed to discuss the agreement and specific tasks with the Agency. There is similar feedback on the Work Programme. However, in terms of on-going communication, while the Extranet is generally perceived to be an effective communications mechanism, the main difficulty from the point of view of the FOPs is that it is not kept up to date. Thus, FOPs frequently receive reminders of work being late that has not yet even been set. Similarly, the Agency's possibilities to follow-up effectively on FOP work are limited as not all FOPs update the status information on tasks once they are completed.

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19.   At an operational level, the working relationship between the staff from the Bilbao office and FOPs is good. However, there is a widespread feeling that the relationship between the Agency and FOPs is not as strong as it used to be. One reason for this is that with EU enlargement, which has not been matched by significantly increased financial allocations to the Agency, it is more difficult to maintain a close relationship with all FOPs. A related concern is that there is not enough face-to-face contact with Agency staff and that it has become more difficult to find out who is responsible for particular matters. At present, direct contact is limited almost entirely to the three FOP meetings in Bilbao and the scope for detailed discussions with particular members of the Agency's staff are very limited. As pointed out in the report, at present there are only three Agency staff from the Network Secretariat helping to coordinate the FOP network. Because they have other responsibilities, this is equivalent to about one full-time person.

20.   The FOP meetings in Bilbao are an important part of the consultation process but more could be done to maximize the benefits. FOP network meetings are held three times a year in Bilbao and there are also other consultations – generally informal – in addition to these events between the Agency and FOPs. However, many FOPs see the meetings in Bilbao as no more than a formality, arguing that there is not enough real discussion and that the results are in any case not taken into account by the Agency in reaching decisions. Some FOPs from EU10 Member States have voiced a concern that these countries are still less ready to put forth their ideas in FOP meetings. However, it is important to note that this not simply a difference between new and old Member States (some FOPs also felt that a divide exists between FOPs within the EU15, particularly between those who have acted in the FOP role for a long period of time and those who are new to the work).

21.   At a more strategic level, feedback from the evaluation suggests that whilst there is adequate scope for FOPs to make an input to preparing events and campaigns, this is less so with more strategic issues – e.g. identifying target group needs and in ensuring that Agency priorities take into account national priorities. In the survey, a significant proportion of FOPs (20%) argued that there was not sufficient scope to influence the Agency's strategy. The area where the FOPs feel that they make the smallest contribution is over decisions on the allocation of financial resources to different projects or priorities. Not all FOPs want a say in more strategic issues of this kind. However, others feel that there should at least be an opportunity for FOPs to make an input if they feel that they have an important contribution to make.

22.   There is a perception that the Agency's strategic planning procedures are not flexible enough to allow changes to work plans to be easily made. According to the survey, whilst 32% of FOPs stated that these procedures were flexible enough, a higher proportion (44%) indicated this was no the case (the remainder did not offer an opinion). From a FOP perspective, the key question is how flexible the Agency's strategic planning procedures are and, in particular, whether there is sufficient scope to adjust tasks/objectives during the course of implementing actions if changing circumstances suggest that changes

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are needed. Most FOPs doe not consider that there is enough flexibility. But Work Programmes, contracts with the Topic Centres, and the financial commitments and contracting procedures that underpin these and other activities, need to be decided well in advance. Similarly, the Agency is bound by the constraints of the European Commission's financial regulations. That said, circumstances can change and at times adjustments need to be accommodated. The Cooperation Agreement does allow for changes to be made during the course of implementation and FOPs are asked to contact the Agency if this is the case. Thus while certain procedures could be improved by the Agency, FOPs need to make full use of the flexibilities the current arrangements already have built into them.

Recommendations – Relationship Between Agency and FOPs

- There is a need for more flexibility in the way in which FOP work plans are implemented with, in particular, the opportunity to adjust objectives, resource allocations, etc, in a timely and non-bureaucratic way if circumstances change.

- There is also room for improved planning with regard to the implementation of the work plans, in terms of clearer timetables etc, as well as more effective use of the Extranet function. Both the Agency and FOPs need to ensure that their inputs to the Extranet are kept up-to-date.

- Agency staff should be given geographical responsibilities and carry out more visits to EU Member States to strengthen the relationship with FOPs and their network partners. This would be mutually beneficial: Agency staff would get to know individual FOPs better and obtain a more in-depth appreciation of priorities in different countries while FOPs would gain a better understanding of Agency's priorities and have more scope for discussing issues of concern to them in depth.

- Consideration should be given to increasing the Agency resources available for network coordination, either by assigning additional staff specifically to this role in the Network Secretariat and/or giving staff geographical responsibilities from other units. If the previous recommendation is adopted, and if each EU Member State is visited at least once a year, this would require around 230 staff days of time (100-150 for preparing, carrying out and following up visits and a further 3-4 days per country for on-going contacts throughout the year).

- Given EU enlargement, consideration should be given to establishing a FOP Steering Group as a way of helping to coordinate the FOPs' position on issues and ensuring that their voice is heard.

- Where not already the case, the working relationship between FOPs and Governing Board members at a national level should be strengthened so that EU-OSHA Board meetings can be used by FOPs as a way of raising issues. Consideration might be given to FOPs making an input (perhaps via a nominated representative or a steering group – see earlier recommendation) to Bureau meetings which generally take place in Bilbao the day after the FOPs meet.

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23. Resourcing issues are in many cases a key factor determining the ability of FOPs to carry out Agency tasks. With respect to human resources, some FOPs simply do not

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have the time themselves, or the support staff, needed - half the FOPs consider that they do not have sufficient time for the carrying out all Agency-related tasks. However, despite this, in many cases the problems are not caused by a shortage of human resources, or time, but more by the difficulties in obtaining the necessary financial resources. Although the FOP subsidy is relevant is this respect, this assistance from the Agency is modest in scale and demonstrates only partial additionality. More important is the capacity of FOPs to raise funds from host organisations and network partners. More generally, in all countries, the role of national networks of OSH specialists, social partners, etc, is also critical from a non-financial perspective to successful implementation of FOP work plans. The research feedback suggests that far more needs to be done in most countries to strengthen the contribution of network partners.

Recommendations – FOP Subsidy

- The FOP subsidy, in its current form, only demonstrates partial additionality and should be discontinued.

- However, if the current FOP subsidy scheme is discontinued, this should be on the basis that (a) it is not discontinued before an alternative is introduced that continues to provide assistance to support national EW campaigns; (b) the Agency consults with FOPs closely over the introduction of an alternative system; and (c) some provision is made, at least for a transitional period, to provide support directly to FOPs who genuinely need it (our research suggests that in the case of EW2005, six FOPs, mainly from EU10 countries, would not have been able to organise any form of EW campaign without the subsidy. On the basis of an average grant allocation of €30-40,000, this would mean a provision of around €200,000 for EW activities).

- As a way of testing the best approach, the arrangements for European Week 2007, i.e. offering a 'European Week Assistance Package' or the FOP subsidy, is helpful and the results should be evaluated to determine which option is preferable for and produces the best results in terms of the effectiveness of campaigns.

- The Agency, with the support of the European Commission, should encourage national authorities to provide additional resources to supplement the FOP subsidy. For example, national funding might be used to help customize Agency materials more closely to national circumstances and target groups.

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24. The integration of FOPs from the EU10 Member States has been successfully achieved. Most FOPs from the EU10 Member States have developed the capacity to make an input to the preparation of work programmes, specifically with regard to identifying the needs of intended beneficiaries. In many of the EU10 countries, however, FOP networks are still relatively weak – reflecting institutional weaknesses generally – and this means that it is difficult to obtain the inputs at a national level that are needed for the FOPs to play a proactive and positive role at a European level.

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8. Target Groups, Products and Services and Impacts

25. The Agency's target groups are quite well defined but cover a very broad field and the question is how key targets should be prioritized and most effectively reached. The overall target group for the Agency's activities and products is defined in its 2002 Communication Strategy as being policy makers responsible for the development of OSH-related legislation; OSH policy 'shapers' (including trade unions and employers' representatives); the OSH professional community; information providers and intermediaries; and end user (employers and those with a direct influence on workers' OSH). This is a very broad definition and our research suggests that there is sometimes uncertainly over whether products and services should be designed specifically for end users (workplaces) or for intermediaries (social partners, OSH specialists, etc). Whilst almost two-thirds of FOPs (64%) indicated in the survey that target groups were 'well-defined', a significant proportion (24%) stated this was not the case (the rest did not offer an opinion). Compared with some other EU agencies, EU-OSHA's target groups (in particular, smaller businesses) are very large and prioritization is therefore needed.

26. A key issue is the extent to which the Agency's products and services are tailored to the needs of different target groups. Here there was varied feedback from the survey work – whilst a high proportion of FOPs (84%) stated that the Agency's products and services were sufficiently customized, this was less so with network partners (70%) and more especially with end users (62%).

 At present, the Agency (through the Topic Centres) is responsible for producing most of the material used by FOPs carrying out Agency-related tasks. As a result, there is some degree of trade-off between benefits of scale obtained, and the lack of local relevance and effectiveness of the materials. There is certainly a view amongst FOPs and network partners that materials produced by the Agency are often rather too 'European' in nature and fail to address issues from a national perspective, thereby reducing their relevance. Thus, some information on OSH issues is not detailed or analytical enough to be of interest to specialists but at the same time is not practical enough for workplaces. This task of tailoring information produced by the Agency to particular target groups is not a function that can be entirely undertaken centrally and the question is therefore whether FOPs and their network partners should be doing more in this respect.

27. European Week campaigns and the dissemination of information via the Agency and national websites are generally seen as the most effective ways of reaching target audiences. There are, however, differing views on the effectiveness of different methods. For example, FOPs consider European Week campaigns as being more effective than network partners. However, there is broad agreement on the increasing importance of electronic dissemination of information. The Agency's website it is an important source of information and, to varying degrees, the network websites make heavy use of the content. The importance, and quality, of the national websites vary, however. In some countries, the Agency website provides a main gateway to information on OSH issues. Elsewhere, other websites, particularly the websites of national OSH institutes, are more used.

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28. In addition to the existing methods the Agency and FOPs use to directly reach target groups, other ways of disseminating information and raising awareness of OSH issues are being developed and this should be continued. Apart from the role of network partners**,** closer joint working with other EU-supported networks, in particular the Euro Info Centres, is being developed and this should considerably enhance the effectiveness of dissemination efforts. The new Community Strategy highlights the need to mainstream OSH issues in other EU policies and feedback from this evaluation suggests that more should be done by the Agency to exploit possibilities in this respect. Ensuring that OSH priorities are addressed through the implementation of Structural Fund programmes, especially measures aimed at SMEs, is an obvious priority in this respect.

29. Overall, feedback from the evaluation suggests that the activities of the Agency and FOP networks are achieving positive impacts and demonstrating a high degree of European added value. When end users were asked for their views on the overall effectiveness of the work of the Agency and FOPs, over two-thirds (69%) stated in the survey that the Agency carries out its activities 'quite' or 'very' effectively. There are, however, differing views regarding the impact of different Agency activities. But, overall and on an aggregated basis, survey feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users points strongly to an appreciation that the European dimension as adding value to purely national and regional initiatives to promote OSH: 30% of end users participating in the survey stated that the European dimension is 'vital' while less than 5% said this was not so (the rest argued it was 'very important').

30. Apart from the benefits associated with gaining access to wider EU expertise and good practices in the OSH field, the technical and other support provided by the Agency, and networking between FOPs, are also important manifestations of European added value. Although the FOP subsidy only demonstrates partial additionality overall, the financial support provided by the Agency is very important in some countries because of the limited resources available from purely national sources to promote OSH policies. There are also economies of scale to be gained from certain activities being undertaken at a European level, for example the preparation of European Week campaign materials, and benefits from the European branding of OSH products and services. These aspects of European added value are more pronounced in some countries than others, often depending on perceptions generally regarding EU membership but also on how well developed OSH practices and policies are. The European dimension is important in many countries in enhancing the credibility of activities to promote OSH, capacity building, sharing good practices and more efficient ways of working generally. However, perceptions regarding European added value vary considerably and in some EU Member States, generally those with relatively highly developed OSH practices and systems, the benefits of Agency activities are not seen as favourably.

31. The Agency has developed tools to assess the impact of some initiatives on target groups but performance measurement methods should be developed to embrace the full range of its activities. European Week campaigns are subject to external evaluation while other initiatives such as the Healthy Workplace Initiative have been assessed internally.

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However, there is a need to develop a performance measurement system for the full range of Agency activities so that the impact on target audiences, and relative effectiveness of different activities, can be monitored on a more comprehensive and on-going basis. The survey work undertaken as part of this evaluation, in particular the survey of end users via *OSHmail*, provides an example of how this might be tackled. Likewise if Agency staff were to undertake field trips to visit FOPs (see earlier recommendation), this could be used an opportunity to assess activities and to facilitate a sharing of good practices.

Recommendations – Agency Products and Services

- Target groups should be more clearly prioritized. Because the Agency has a broad range of target groups, and a potentially very large number of SME 'end users', prioritization of targets is essential if outputs are to be relevant and impacts maximized. A greater emphasis on providing information that is practical, and that focuses on good practices is needed.

- In addition to existing methods of reaching target audiences, new methods should be developed including joint working with other EU-supported networks (in particular, the Euro Info Centres) and mainstreaming OSH priorities in other EU programmes such as the Structural Funds.

- More could be done to make the Agency's website user-friendly, particularly by making it easier for end users to identify relevant information and to navigate generally. The fact that much of information available from the Agency's website is mainly in English is also widely regarded as a constraint on it being used, especially by end users.

- Performance measurement tools should be developed so that the impact on target audiences, and relative effectiveness of different Agency activities, can be monitored on a more comprehensive and on-going basis. Apart from periodic end user surveys, Agency staff could be asked to undertake an assessment of FOP and network activities as part of their field trips (see earlier recommendation), using this as an opportunity to highlight good and less good practices based on experience in other countries.

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Introduction

The external evaluation of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (the 'Agency') was carried out by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES). This document contains the final report.

1.1   Resume of Study Aims

The objectives of this evaluation were, in summary, to evaluate the focal points (FOPs) and their network's contribution to the performance of the Agency in achieving its mission. The more specific aims were to:

- Assess the extent to which the **activities of each focal point and its network**, in particular the social partners, have met the objectives in the document, 'Preparing for Enlargement. Proposal for a Second Generation Agency Network';

- Assess the **Agency's role in supporting the focal points'** and their networks' activities;

- Assess the contribution of the focal points and their networks taken as one to the **efficiency and effectiveness** of the Agency's activities.

- Assess the **overall impact** of Agency activities.

- Provide **conclusions and recommendations** to help develop and optimise future Agency activities.

The terms of reference contain a number of more specific issues. These are summarised in on the next page. As with any evaluation, this exercise fulfils two basic purposes – examining past experience and achievements, and, secondly, helping to define future priorities. The results of the evaluation should make it possible for the Agency's Board to decide on the future organisation of the FOP network – including the Agency's role in supporting their work – so as to maximise results and impacts, efficiency and effectiveness.

It is important to stress that the primary purpose of this assignment was to evaluate the contribution of the FOPs and their national networks to helping the Agency to achieve its mission, rather than an overall evaluation of the Agency.

1.2   Structure of the Final Report

The final report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2: Background and Evaluation Framework** – review of the policy context and role of the Agency, previous research, key evaluation issues and methodological approach to the assignment.

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- **Section 3: Role of the National Focal Points** – this section considers key issues relating to the FOP role and national networks.

- **Section 4: Role of the Agency** - the effectiveness of the Agency's support for FOPs and other key issues relating to its role;

- **Section 5**: **Impact Assessment** – the extent to which the Agency is reaching target groups, relevance of different products and services, impacts and European added value.

- **Section 6: Benchmarking** – comparisons with three other EU-supported agencies (Eurofound, EEA, Cedefop and the EMCDDA).

- **Section 7: Conclusions and Recommendations** – overall conclusions from the evaluation and recommendations for the future.

The report is supported by various appendices – a list of interviews (Appendix A), an analysis of survey responses (B), and copies of the survey questionnaires (Appendix C).

On the next page we provide a 'quick guide' to key questions from the terms of reference and how to find the relevant assessment in this report.

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Quick Guide - Key Questions from the Terms of Reference/Evaluation

Relevance, Coherence and Synergy	Pages
• To what extent has the involvement of the focal points and their networks in the preparation of the work programmes ensured that the objectives identified in the Agency's work programmes are in line with the needs of the intended beneficiaries of the activities?	25-27
• To what extent does the involvement of the focal points and their networks in the preparation of the work programme support coherence between the objectives of Agency activities and national activities?	22-25 32-33
• How does Agency coordination of the network of focal points favour – or the contrary – an effective contribution from the focal points and their networks to the planning process?	43-53
Effectiveness and Efficiency	
• What has been the contribution of the individual focal points and their networks to the Agency's outputs?	53-55 58-68
• What is the extent and impact of focal point – focal point cooperation?	33-36 48-49
• Which elements at the national level (resources, institutional context, language, etc) favour or disfavour the contributions from the focal points?	15-17
• To what extent has the way Agency-focal point cooperation is organized contributed or hindered focal point contributions? This should also include an assessment of the focal points' possibility to take part in the planning process and the organisation of the implementation of Agency activities.	22-27
• What has been the Agency's role in supporting the focal points' and their networks' activities?	43-48
Impacts and Added Value	
• To what extent do the results and impacts of the Agency's activities correspond to the needs of its beneficiaries?	57-58
• Are the target groups satisfied with the Agency's products? Are the products considered valid and relevant?	58-68
• To what extent have the activities of the Agency resulted in any unintended/unplanned results and impacts (both desirable and undesirable)?	Throughout

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This section examines the background and policy context to the evaluation of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work, and then reviews key issues and the overall framework for the evaluation.

2.1   Policy Context and Community Strategy

Retrospective aspects of this evaluation cover a period covered by the European Commission's Communication **Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006 (COM(2002) 118 final)** which was published in March 2002. However, insofar as the evaluation also has a forward looking aspect, the February 2007 Communication **Improving quality and productivity at work: Community Strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (COM(2007) 62)** is also highly relevant.

The first of these documents, the 2002 Communication, laid out the basis of the European Community's response to OSH issues in the face of changes in the world of work and changes in the nature of risk. The Strategy emphasized the need to combine different instruments and finding a basis in the substantial *acquis* of many decades of Community policies, with priority given to prevention as provided in the Framework Directive 59/391, founded on the experience vested in the various Community programmes in the area. The need to involve all players - for example, the public authorities, the social partners, companies, public and private insurers – within a framework of "good governance" was underlined.

The 2002-2006 strategy was superseded in February 2007 by a new EU Strategy, entitled *Improving quality and productivity at work: Community Strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (COM(2007) 62).* The Strategy emphasises particularly OSH issues faced by SMEs, as well as the higher than average risk of accidents at work faced by sectors such as construction, agriculture, transport and health. Young workers, migrants, older workers and those with insecure working conditions are also highlighted as at risk groups. The 2007-2012 Strategy notes that specific illnesses are on the rise, including musculoskeletal diseases and illnesses caused by psychological strain.

Both strategies have had implications for the **work of the Agency**. The 2002-2006 strategy highlighted the important role to be played by the Agency in the promotion, awareness-raising and anticipation activities needed to achieve the objectives of the Strategy. Further, the Council Resolution of June 2002 on the Strategy (2002/C 161/01) required the Agency to play a leading role in the collection and dissemination of information on good practice, awareness-raising and risk anticipation The Council Resolution also calls on the Commission to promote cooperation between the Member States and the social partners at European level through the Agency, with a view to future enlargement.

Both the **European Parliament Resolution** on the strategy and the **European Economic and Social Committee Opinion** (2002/C 241/19) highlighted the role of the Agency in the evaluation of risks and emphasized the importance of contacts and cooperation with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The

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heightened importance of the Agency, as defined in the Community Strategy 2002-2006, and called for in the Resolution and Opinions laid out above, are taken into account in the most recent amendment to the Agency's Founding Regulation (1112/2005).

The 2007-12 strategy aims to achieve an overall 25% reduction of occupational accidents and diseases in the EU by 2012. It sets out a series of actions at European and national levels in the following main areas:

- Improving and **simplifying existing legislation** and enhancing its implementation in practice through non-binding instruments such as exchange of good practices, awareness-raising campaigns and better information and training;

- Defining and implementing **national strategies** adjusted to the specific context of each Member State, targeting the sectors and companies most affected and fixing national targets for reducing occupational accidents and illness;

- **Mainstreaming of health and safety at work** in other national and European policy areas (education, public health, research) and finding new synergies;

- Better identifying and assessing potential **new risks** through more research, exchange of knowledge and practical application of results.

With regard to the Community Strategy 2007-2012, the focus areas and target groups also reflect in the role defined for EU-OSHA. The Strategy calls on the Agency to:

Community Strategy 2007-2012 and Role of the Agency
• Ensure that its **efforts to raise awareness and promote and disseminate best practice focus to a greater degree on high-risk sectors and SMEs;**
• Develop **sectoral awareness-raising campaigns targeted in particular at SMEs**, and to promote the management of health and safety at work in enterprises through the exchange of experience and good practices aimed at specific sectors;
• Collect and disseminate information intended to **support the development of occupational health promotion campaigns**.
• Encourage **national health and safety research institutes to set joint priorities**, exchange results and include occupational health and safety requirements in research programmes;
• Draw up, through its Risk Observatory, a **report outlining the specific challenges** in terms of health and safety posed by the more extensive integration of **women, immigrant workers and younger and older workers** into the labour market;
• Review the extent to which health and safety aspects have been incorporated into **Member States' vocational and occupational training policies**;
• The Risk Observatory should enhance risk anticipation to include **risks associated with new technologies, biological hazards, complex human-machine interfaces and the impact of demographic trends.**

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2.2   Role of the Agency and National Focal Points

The European Agency for Safety & Health at Work was established in July 1994 and started operating in 1996. The Agency, which became fully operational by 1999, defines its **mission** as being:

> *'To make Europe's workplaces safer, healthier and more productive. The European Agency acts as a catalyst for developing, collecting, analysing and disseminating information that improves the state of occupational safety and health in Europe'.*

The legal basis for the Agency's activities lies in four previous **Council Regulations** - 2062/94, 1643/95, 1654/2003 and 1112/2005.[1]

As the **Rolling Work Programme** for 2005-2008[2] notes, four strategic goals can be identified for the Agency within the framework of the Agency Regulation and the context of the mission. These are to:

- Create the principal **source of safety and health information** in Europe and the most comprehensive and user-friendly resource on the Internet;

- **Support the formulation and implementation of safety and health policies**, and the organisations involved in this process;

- Promote the **identification and sharing of information on good practice** solutions at the workplace level.

- Promote **Member State co-operation on information collection and research** and thus make the best use of resources.

According to the Rolling Work Programme for 2005-2008, the amendments introduced with the 2005 Regulation 'basically adapt the [founding] regulation to the course of action taken by the Agency in recent years.' This includes introducing an explicit link between Agency activities and the Community strategies on safety and health at work.

The amended regulation makes reference in different contexts to the role of the Agency in analyzing information, in addition to collecting and disseminating it, and stipulates that the

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[1] In 1995 (1643/95), the modifications concerned the inclusion of the three new EU Member States and in 2003 (1654/2003) the updating of the Regulation in accordance with new EU financial and public document access provisions.

[2] *Promoting Quality at Work in an Enlarged European Union: Information for Safe, Healthy and productive Jobs. Rolling Work Programme for 2005-2008.* European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, December 2004.

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Agency should identify good practices and promote preventive actions. For example, with regard to good practices, the amended Regulation states that "the Agency should in particular focus on practices which constitute practical tools to be used in drawing up an assessment of the risks to safety and health at work, and identifying the measures to be taken to tackle them". In addition the amended Regulation states that the information produced should be "comprehensible to the end users". The importance of consulting the views of social partners is also emphasized.

The fourth Council Regulation also added social partners to the list of target audiences. In 2005 Regulation these are defined as being the Community bodies, the Member States, the social partners and those involved in the [OSH] field.

2.2.1   Organisational Structure

The European Agency for Safety and Health at work, which has an annual budget of some €14 million, is organised on the **tripartite principle**, bringing together representatives from national authorities, employers and workers' organisations.

At the management level, the Agency's Governing Board and Bureau decide on the major strategic issues, such as work programmes and budgets. The Agency's **Governing Board** is composed of representatives from EU Member State governments, workers' organisations, employers and the European Commission. In addition, there are observers from the Dublin Foundation and one each from the European social partners (European Trade Union Confederation and BusinessEurope).

The modification made in 2005 (1112/2005) introduced changes to the operation of the Board. The Administrative Board was replaced by a Governing Board, consisting of one member representing the Government from each Member State, one member representing the employers' organisations from each Member State; one member representing the employees' organisations from each Member State; and three members representing the Commission. The amendment also states, for example, that the representatives of governments, employees' and employers' organisations shall each form a group within the Governing Board, with representatives from European level organisations acting as their coordinators. In addition to the changes in the structure of the Governing Board, the amendment introduced a **Bureau** of 11 members, made up of the chair and the three vice-chairs of the Governing Board, one coordinator, and one more representative of each group and of the Commission. From 2006, three Advisory Groups created by the Board have existed giving the Agency strategic advice in three priority areas: Working Environment Information; European Risk Observatory; and Communication and Promotion.

The Agency's **Bilbao office** has some 60 personnel at administrative or secretarial grades divided into five different units (Network Secretariat, Communications and Promotion Unit, Risk Observatory Unit, Working Environment Information Unit, Resources and Services Centre). Responsibility for coordinating activities involving the National Focal Points lies, in the first instance, with the Network Secretariat which has a total of nine staff including two network managers, a legal advisor, finance officer, two assistants, a liaison officer

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who is based in Brussels and two secretaries. However, the other units also work with the FOP network on specific activities, e.g. the provision of materials for the European Week campaigns and Risk Observatory activities.

The Agency and FOPs are supported by a number of **Expert Groups**. These expert groups, members of which come from all EU Member States, EFTA and Candidate countries together with observers representing each of the social partners and the Commission, provide advice to the Agency in their field of expertise and contribute to implementation of the Agency's Work Programmes. The Agency also commissions specific one-off studies from academic and OSH institutions or consultants to conduct specific research. Two **Topic Centres** (the Risk Observatory and Working Environment Information) have also been established.

2.2.2   Role of the National Focal Points

At a national level, **National Focal Points** (FOPs) have been set up in each EU Member State, as well as the four EFTA countries, two accession countries (until 1 January 2007) and two candidate countries. The FOPs are the Agency's main health and safety information network and they are nominated by national authorities as the Agency's official representatives in that country.

Most FOPs are hosted by the **national administrations** and usually work within the government departments related to employment and/or health. Some FOPs work for national health and safety institutes or labour inspectorates. The **tripartite organisational principle** is adopted also at the national level networks, and FOP structures include representatives of employer and employee organisations.

According to its founding Regulation (2062/94), the Agency is required to periodically re-examine its network in the light of experience. In 2003, a document entitled *Preparing for Enlargement: Proposal for a 2nd generation Agency Network* (hereafter the 'Strategy') laying out a proposal for dealing with the challenges of enlargement, was adopted by the Administrative Board. The key role of the FOPs is to provide information and feedback to Agency initiatives and products and they are consulted on all information activities related to the national level. According to the 2003 Strategy*,* the FOPs' tasks are divided into two categories - network management and information actions. Their tasks are defined as being to:

- **Oganise and manage national tripartite network** of the principal OSH institutions and organisations and to facilitate the information flow between the Agency and the national network members and co-ordinate the replies to expert and network consultations;

- **Participate in the Agency's consultation procedures** by organising nominations and assessments related to the delivery and development of the Agency's work programmes as set out in the Agency's work programme and the annual work

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plans of the Focal Points,

- In relation to 'Information Actions' (to be undertaken jointly by the FOPs and the Agency), to organise and promote the Agency's **European Week campaign** and related Good practice Award, and to manage the Agency's **national Focal Point websites**.

A key question to be examined in relation to *'Preparing for Enlargement – Proposals for a Second Generation Agency Network'* is whether, in light of EU enlargement but with budgetary allocations that have remained basically unchanged, the Agency has nevertheless been able to achieve the basic remit set out in Community legislation. 'Preparing for Enlargement' contains a strategy that is designed to make this possible by streamlining the FOP functions to concentrate on core functions. According to the Strategy, there should be a reduction in the quantity of national activities undertaken by the FOPs (reflecting more focused Agency project activities), a less extensive role in the distribution of publications, and a more limited number of European expert meetings.

Each year, an **annual plan** is prepared on the basis of the Agency's annual work programme which specifies the tasks that the FOPs have to carry out throughout the year. The Agency organizes meetings of the FOPs three times a year. FOPs from Member States and the Observers from the European Commission, the European Social Partners, EFTA and Candidate Countries are invited to these meetings..

Table 2.1: Key Points - National Focal Point Functions

Tasks	Network Management		Information Actions	
	National Networks	Consultation and language checking	European Week	FP Website
Definition of Role	Defined in updated basic requirements			
Resources	National		National and/or Agency (Agency co-funding available for one or both of the information actions)	
Planning	Annual Work Plan		Annual Work Plan and/or Grant Agreement	
Management	Agency will develop on-line real time reporting tool		As for network management and on funded activities	

Source: Preparing for Enlargement: Proposal for a 2nd generation Agency Network

2.3   Review of Previous Research

An evaluation of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work was carried out in 2001 (**Does information communicate? Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work', February 2001**).

Overall, the 2001 evaluation of the Agency came to positive conclusions regarding the Agency's role in setting up an EU-wide information network and launching events, raising awareness of OSH issues on the European strategic agenda, publications and, especially,

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its websites. A number of recommendations were made with regard to the future: improving communication and user-feedback mechanisms; strengthening the FOPs; and further development of strategic management of the Agency.

With respect to the relationships with FOPs, the evaluation found that the FOPs needed to engage more proactively in the network effort, while strengthening national networks and engagement. The evaluation also suggested that improving the co-operation within the network was a pre-requisite for a better customer orientation. The evaluation also suggested that the structure and the strategic management within the Agency needed to be improved by strengthening the role of the Board in the strategic capacity and of the Bureau in executive capacity as well as by strengthening the FOPs.

The 2001 evaluation, as well as the previous evaluations of the European Week, highlight that the diversity of national situations needs to be better addressed. The varied institutional set-up across the Member States, the experience of running similar networks or information campaigns as well as the resources that are available, were found to influence the extent to which the FOPs delivered their tasks. These challenges have become even more pronounced following the two most recent EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007. The evaluation undertaken in 2001 also commented on the utility of the Agency's information and found that the information was useful in a general sense, but that it needed to be made more usable in terms of problem solving. The previous evaluations of the European Week also highlighted the limitations in assessing the impact of the network activities on the final beneficiaries in the workplaces. These evaluations also found that the FOPs considered that the general management of the European Week campaign was organized well by the Agency, but they felt that there could be more trans-national exchange of experience among the FOPs.

In addition to the previous evaluation of the Agency, there have been a number of **evaluations of the European Week campaigns**. Whilst these evaluations are generally positive about the European Week campaigns and their impacts, they have consistently stressed the need to do more to reach key target groups, in particular workplaces, to mobilize network partners more effectively, and to ensure that campaign materials are relevant to particular audiences. The role of the FOP subsidy has also been examined, the conclusion being that it only demonstrates partial additionality.

There has also been an **evaluation of the EU agency system as a whole**. [3] This concluded that 'the rationale of outsourcing tends to be related to perceived comparative advantages of Agencies such as a certain degree of independence (enhancing the credibility of their activities), the greater visibility they lend to the policy area/issue concerned, their ability to build up and maintain a highly specialised workforce and expertise, their enhanced possibilities to ensure stakeholder involvement both in institutional and operational terms,

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[3] 'Meta Evaluation of the Community's Agency System', DG Budget, European Commission, 2003.   10

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and their greater flexibility and efficiency in implementing Community programmes and legislation'.

2.4   Intervention Logic and Key Evaluation Issues

An understanding of the Agency's 'intervention logic' is important in providing an overall framework for the evaluation of its activities and their contribution to key objectives. Below, we summarise the intervention logic and then consider key evaluation issues.

2.4.1   Intervention Logic

The Community Strategy for Safety and Health at Work and supporting legislation and regulations provide a framework for the Agency's mission. The following diagram summarises the intervention logic and the relationship with key evaluation issues.

Figure 2.1: Intervention Logic and Analytical Framework
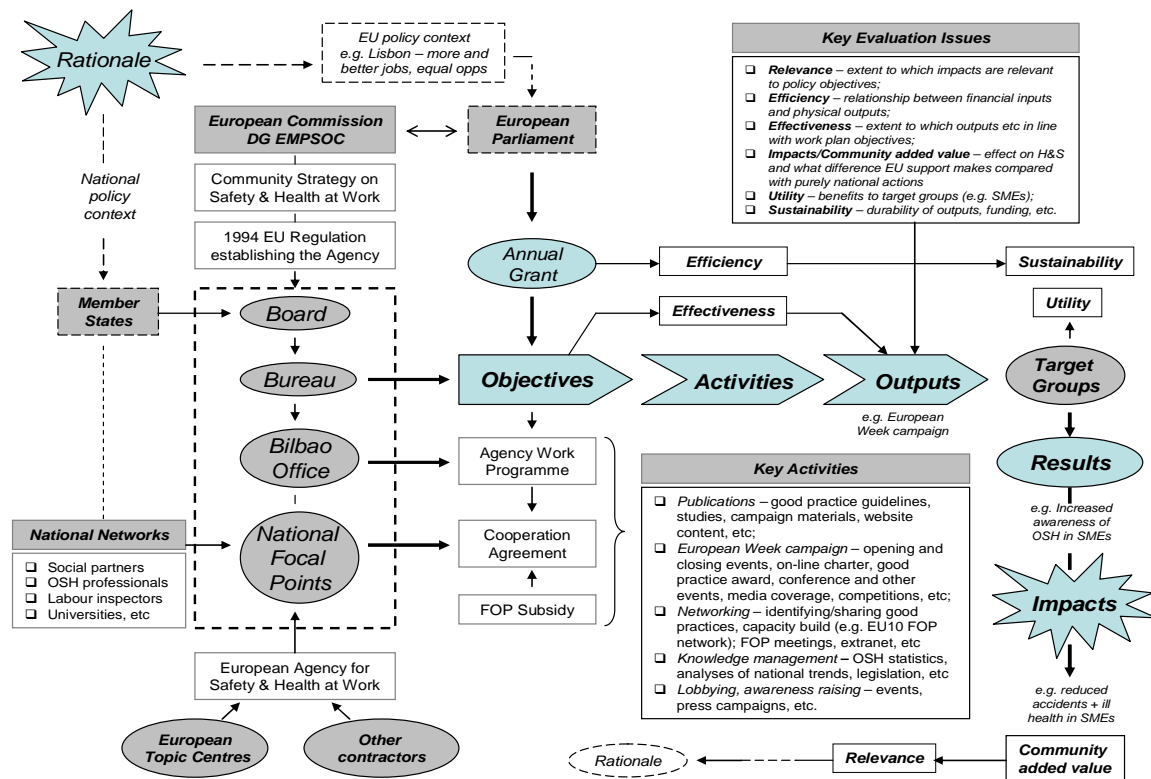
The left-hand side of the diagram sketches out the Agency's main organisational features. The right-hand side then summarises aspects of the intervention logic relating to outputs, results and impacts, together with the key evaluation issues associated with these various outcomes.

The **rationale** for the Agency's activities, from an institutional perspective, lies in the added value of the EU's agency system – the argument that some actions to promote OSH can

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be more effectively derived at an EU level rather than by Member States acting on their own but that dedicated structures (i.e. the Agency and national networks) are needed rather than direct delivery by the European Commission itself.

The **Agency's objectives** are defined, in the Founding Regulation, in quite generally terms, namely to 'act as a catalyst for developing, collecting, analysing and disseminating information that improves the state of occupational safety and health in Europe'. The dissemination of information constitutes the Agency's main **'outputs'**. FOPs and their network partners have a key role to play in both the information collection and dissemination process. In this process, the Agency's primary function is to combine and analyse information from different countries, and to then make it available in a form that added value to what is available at a purely national level.

The Agency and FOP network's activities should lead to various **'results'**, namely influencing the behaviour of target audiences (decision-makers, social partners, OSH professionals, etc) and, in particular, raising awareness of OSH issues and ways of tackling them. Again, FOPs have a key function in this respect by developing national networks through which target audiences can be reached. These and other 'results' should then lead to **'impacts'**, defined in the Founding Regulation as 'improving the state of occupational safety and health in Europe'. However, the Agency cannot directly influence outcomes of this sort and it is more appropriate to assess its role in terms of 'intermediate impacts', i.e. the extent to which the information it provides improves the understanding of OSH issues and leads to actions at an EU and national level which subsequently have positive impacts on OSH trends.

2.4.2   Key Evaluation Issues

The approach adopted to evaluating the Agency's network should be consistent with guidelines on the evaluation of EU-funded activities generally. These highlight six key evaluation issues:

- **Relevance** – the extent to which the Agency's activities are relevant to the needs of the target audiences and contribute to the overall aims set out in the Community Strategy.

- **Effectiveness** – the extent to which the outcomes achieved by interventions are in line with specific objectives of focal points and the Agency's overall goals.

- **Efficiency** – the relationship between the financial inputs and outcomes, and value for money (whether the same level of financial inputs could have achieved more outcomes, or whether the same outcomes could have been achieved with lower financial inputs).

- **Impacts and added value** – the effect of interventions on target groups and the extent to which, in the absence of the Agency's activities, these outcomes would have been possible.

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- **Utility** – the extent to which the results and impacts are in line with the needs of the Agency's target groups.

- **Sustainability** – the extent to which outcomes prove to be long-lasting, i.e. last beyond the period of the Agency's support.
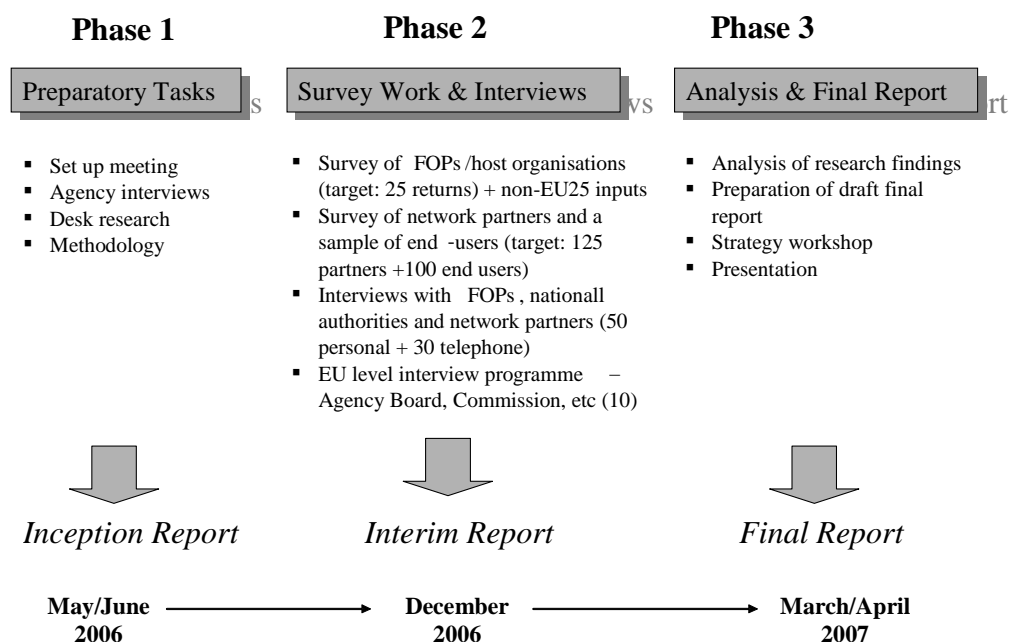
Most of these key evaluation issues are incorporated into the high level aims of this assignment as summarized in Section 1. It is worth stressing again that the primary purpose of this assignment has been to evaluate the contribution of the FOPs and their national networks to helping the Agency to achieve its objectives. As such, whilst an understanding of the Agency's impacts is clearly important, the focus of the research has been on assessing the role of FOPs and their networks in helping to achieve positive outcomes rather than evaluating the outcomes themselves. Similar considerations apply to the other key evaluation issues highlighted above.

2.5   Methodological Approach and Work Plan

The evaluation was undertaken in three phases:

- **Phase 1: Preparatory tasks** – a set up meeting with the Agency and interviews with key staff, desk research, finalisation of the evaluation methodology, leading to submission of an inception report in June 2006.

- **Phase 2: Survey work and interviews** – surveys of the FOPs, network partners and end-users, together with an interview programme with FOPs, network partners and European Commission officials. An interim report was submitted in December 2006.

- **Phase 3: Analysis and final report** – analysis of the research findings, benchmarking exercise, a workshop and preparation of the final report.

Figure 2.2: Overview of Methodological Approach

Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**
Preparatory Tasks	Survey Work & Interviews	Analysis & Final Report
▪ Set up meeting ▪ Agency interviews ▪ Desk research ▪ Methodology	▪ Survey of FOPs /host organisations (target: 25 returns) + non-EU25 inputs ▪ Survey of network partners and a sample of end-users (target: 125 partners +100 end users) ▪ Interviews with FOPs, nationall authorities and network partners (50 personal + 30 telephone) ▪ EU level interview programme – Agency Board, Commission, etc (10)	▪ Analysis of research findings ▪ Preparation of draft final report ▪ Strategy workshop ▪ Presentation
Inception Report	*Interim Report*	*Final Report*
May/June 2006	**December 2006**	**March/April 2007**

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During the second phase of the evaluation, extensive consultations were undertaken to obtain view on key issues:

- A survey of the FOPs/host organisations covering all EU Member States;

- A survey of network partners and an on-line survey of the Agency's user groups;

- An interview programme covering Governing Board/Bureau members, Agency staff, FOPs and some network partners, and European Commission officials to examine key issues in more depth.

Visits were made to all EU Member States to conduct face-to-face interviews with FOPs and their network partners. Arrangements with regard to the network partner consultations were made by the FOPs and in some cases involved on-to-one interviews while in other cases, network partners were brought together for a group discussion. To the extent possible, all social partners were covered by these discussions.

FOPs: the FOP survey examined a number of issues - inputs made by FOPs to the Agency's strategic planning procedures; the Cooperation Agreement and the resources available to support FOPs; networking between FOPs, the role of national networks, views on the impacts being achieved and the added value of the European dimension, etc. The key issues raised in the FOP questionnaire (see Appendix C) followed the terms of reference for this evaluation quite closely. However, there were a number of questions, for example relating to OSH institutional structures in different countries and the effect these have on the FOPs' ability to help deliver key Agency objectives, which were best discussed on a face-to-face basis.

Network partners: as part of the evaluation, a survey of network partners was undertaken. As noted above, network partners were also interviewed as part of the consultations with FOPs. The purpose of this aspect of the Phase 2 fieldwork was to obtain views on how effectively activities supported by the Agency are being implemented at a national level, the extent of networking and the impacts achieved. Table 2.2 provides an analysis of the response rates to the survey of network partners.

End users: the third survey was designed to obtain feedback from the Agency's end users. The *OSH*mail newsletter was used to invite participation in an on-line survey. This was done in the August and September editions of *OSH*mail with an e-mail reminder being sent to subscribers in early October 2006. In the *OSH*mail editions concerned, a web link was provided to an on-line questionnaire on CSES's website. In the survey of end users we asked for views on how relevant the Agency's activities are to their organisations, the extent to which they have been involved in activities promoted by the Agency, views on future priorities, etc.

Governing Board, Agency staff, European Commission: a number of Governing Board members were interviewed as part of the Phase 2 consultations in EU Member States. CSES also held face-to-face interviews with a number of Agency staff. European Commission officials were also covered by the Phase 2 interview programme. During the course of the

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assignment, two presentations were made to FOP meetings in Bilbao, one to the Bureau and another, as part of the Phase 3 workshop, to the Governing Board.

Below, we provide a summary of the survey work and interview programme. A more detailed analysis is provided in Appendix A.

Table 2.2: Summary – Scope of the Phase 2 Survey Work and Interviews

Target Group	Survey	Interviews
National Focal Points	25	25
Network Partners	83	110
End users (*OSH*mail survey)	771	-
Governing Board	33	18
Agency staff	-	12
European Commission, other EU Agencies, etc	-	8

The Phase 2 research included a **benchmarking exercise** to compare certain aspects of the evaluation of the Agency's networking activities against other EU-supported agencies. Benchmarking was not set out as a requirement in the terms of reference for the evaluation but was nevertheless suggested by CSES as a useful exercise. It was agreed that the comparators should be the European Environment Agency (EEA, Copenhagen), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA, Lisbon), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound, Dublin) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, Thessalonki).

The EEA and the EMCDDA are of particular interest since they also coordinate networks of national focal points, while the EEA has also been subject to an external evaluation in the last five years. With regard to Eurofound and Cedefop, the fact that these agencies work with tripartite structures makes them also relevant for a comparative analysis. In two cases (EEA, Eurofound), the research involved face-to-face discussions with the agencies. In the other two cases, telephone interviews were undertaken. The benchmarking exercise focused on examining the role and organisation of national focal point networks (contractual arrangements, funding, relationship with agencies, etc) and comparing experience.

In Phase 3 of the evaluation, the research findings were subject to detailed analysis. At this stage, we also organised a **survey of Governing Board members**. This had been delayed to enable the survey to focus on obtaining feedback on emerging findings, and conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation. A **draft final report** was prepared in March 200. Key findings from the draft report were then presented to a **workshop** which took place in Bilbao towards the end of that month attended by Governing Board members and FOPs. The results were also discussed at an Agency staff **brainstorming session**, facilitated by CSES, which took place shortly after the workshop. In both cases, the emphasis was on using the results of the evaluation to help plan the Agency's future strategy.

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Overview

A number of tasks have been assigned to the FOPs under the Agency's strategy 'Preparing for Enlargement: Proposal for a 2nd generation Agency Network' - to organize a national network, participate in the Agency's consultation procedures, manage a focal point website, and to organize national European Week campaigns. This section examines how the FOPs carry out these and related tasks.

We begin in Section 3.1 by examining national OSH structures which have a bearing on how the FOP function is organized, the resources available, main functions, etc. Subsequent sub-sections then examine the FOPs' role in relation to each of the main tasks outlined above. Related to this, the analysis also addresses a number of questions from the terms of reference:

- *Which elements at the national level (resources, institutional context, language, etc) favour or disfavour the contributions from the focal points?*

- *To what extent has the involvement of the FOPs and their networks in the preparation of the work programmes ensured that the objectives identified in the Agency's work programmes are in line with the needs of the intended beneficiaries of the activities?*

- *To what extent does the involvement of the FOPs and their networks in the preparation of the work programme support coherence between the objectives of Agency activities and national activities?*

- *What is the extent and impact of focal point – focal point cooperation?*

3.1   National Structures and the FOP Function

As noted in the previous section, National Focal Points (FOPs) have been set up in each EU Member State, as well as in the candidate countries and the four EFTA countries. The FOPs are the Agency's main health and safety information network.

3.1.1   National OSH Structures

The role of FOPs in a national context needs to be seen against the backdrop of national structures and traditions with regard to OSH. There are significant differences between EU Member States in the way OSH policies and responsibilities are organized:

- In some countries responsibility for OSH is centralised in national administrations or in dedicated agencies;

- Elsewhere, responsibility for OSH is often shared at a national level by different government departments, typically those responsible for Employment and/or Health/Welfare;

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- Another model is where decentralized state structures exist and OSH responsibilities lie mainly with regional authorities.

Most FOPs are based in **national administrations**, in particular the departments responsible for employment and/or health. In many countries the FOP is part of a National Labour Inspectorate. In some cases, FOPs are hosted by **specialised agencies** (e.g. the Health and Safety Executive in the UK). Some FOPs are not employed by government departments at all but rather by semi autonomous **national health and safety institutes** (e.g. the National Labour Protection Institute in Poland). In Ireland, an entirely different approach has been adopted with the FOP function being outsourced to the European Information Centre since 2005 although there is close joint working with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). In countries with a decentralized state structures, the FOP function involves working with a wider network of **regional authorities** to whom responsibility for OSH issues has been devolved (e.g. Belgium, Germany and Spain).

Our research suggests that the different FOP host structures have merits and drawbacks: for example, while national health and safety institutes have ready access to information and expertise on OSH issues, administrative support (e.g. for translations) is often not so easily available. Conversely, while FOPs based in national administrations generally have good access to support services, the procedures involved in taking decisions are often more bureaucratic and time-consuming. The seniority of the person managing the FOP function is also an important factor, both in ensuring that the necessary administrative support is available and with regard to decision-making. Likewise, the more decentralized governmental structures are, the more complex is the FOP role in coordinating national networks.

A further factor influencing the FOP function is **changing host structures**. In a number of countries, responsibility for OSH (and the FOP host structures) has been transferred from one government department to another, often following elections. There are several examples of where this lack of continuity in OSH structures and resourcing has had a negative impact on the FOP function. For example, in recent years the FOP function in **Portugal** has been carried out against the background of almost continuous change. Originally, under IDICT, the roles of health and safety inspection and policy/advisory support to business were then combined. These roles were then separated again under a new entity (ISHST) only to be combined again in 2006 when the ACT (National Authority for Working Conditions) was established.

In **Hungary**, occupational safety is dealt with by the Labour Inspectorate while occupational health is covered by an agency under the Ministry of Health. This division of functions has caused problems but a decision has recently been taken to merge the agencies responsible for OSH. In these and other cases, the FOP function often, in practice, extends beyond its formal remit in providing continuity and a fixed reference point for network partners and other in a constantly changing institutional setting; linked to this, FOPs have often been a catalyst for the development of tripartitism in situations where joint working between social

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partners in the OSH field did not previously exist (positive 'unintended effects').

In our survey, FOPs were asked about how helpful their **host organisation** is in making it possible to carry out FOP tasks. As can be seen from the following analysis, the support provided to FOPs is generally regarded as positive.

Table 3.1: How helpful is your host organisation in making it possible for you to carry out FOP tasks?

Response	Number	%
Very supportive	18	72.0
Not very supportive	5	20.0
No response	2	8.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

Although most FOPs (70.8%) consider their host organisation to be 'very supportive', some FOPs commented that whilst this is generally true, there is pressure to give priority to tasks assigned by national authorities in a situation where a choice has to be made between this and carrying out Agency-related tasks. Thus, according to one FOP, the host organisation is "not supportive if other non-FOP deadlines are not met due to pressures from FOP work". In the interviews, several FOPs also commented that the FOP function was considered something of an "add on" to the tasks performed by the host organisation – and consequently, in some cases, to the workload of the FOP manager.

More generally, as the following table shows, most FOPs (83.3%) consider that they have sufficient support from **national sources** generally for the carrying out of Agency tasks.

Table 3.2: Do you have enough support from national sources to carry out the FOP function?

Response	Number	%
Yes	20	80.0
No other resources available	3	12.0
No response	2	8.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

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3.1.2 Main FOP Functions

On average, FOPs devote just over half of their time to Agency activities. The following table provides a breakdown of the time that is taken up by FOP-related and other activities.

Table 3.3: Time devoted by FOPs to Agency activities/other activities

Tasks (Past 6-12 months)	Average % of time
Time devoted to Agency activities	53.5
Time devoted to other activities	42.3
Total	**95.8**

Source: FOP survey

Considerable differences exist from one country to another in the time that FOPs can devote to Agency activities, with the proportions ranging from 10% to 100%. As noted earlier, there are of course circumstances on a day-to-day basis when it is difficult for FOPs to balance commitments to the Agency with those to their host organisations, but this situation is inevitable and there is probably very little that can be done to avoid it beyond improving time management. More fundamental is the question of whether the **Cooperation Agreement** and **arrangements between the Agency and national authorities** generally mean that FOPs have sufficient financial and human resources to perform their function effectively (this question is considered later in this report).   The following chart provides an analysis of how FOPs use the time available for Agency tasks.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of FOPs' time taken up by different tasks

Source: FOP survey

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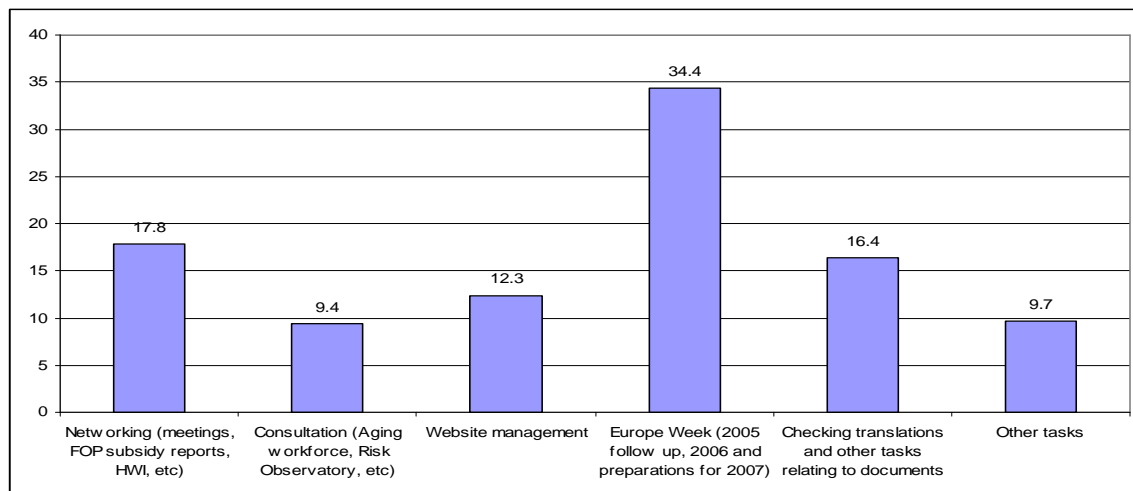
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As the chart above shows, the organisation of **European Week campaigns** is overall the most time-consuming activity for the FOPs, taking up on average just over a third (34.4%) of the time available (the interviews suggest that in some cases this takes up between 50% and 70% of FOPs' total time input). Much of this time is devoted to translation work (see below).

Other activities which take up a considerable amount of time are networking (17.8%), the checking translations and other tasks relating to documents (16.4%). However, with regard to these two types of tasks, the proportion of time taken up varies significantly between FOPs. In the case of **networking**, the proportions vary between 5% and 50%. This could be partly explained by not only differences in the actual time spent on networking, but also the differing interpretations of the term itself which it would seem can cover a very wide range of activities.

The interview programme suggests that a number of FOPs are not directly responsible for **website management,** having either outsourced the activity (BE, FI) or transferred it to another department in charge of IT within their organisation (FR, UK). Where website management is dealt with by a separate in-house IT department of a Ministry or other national authority, there can be complications with the FOP tending to loose control and the overall structures and guidelines for IT use making changes or additions to the websites difficult. Some countries spend a considerable amount of time inputting information to their websites on the national OSH policies for the benefit of exchanging experience at a pan-European level, Denmark and Sweden (where the website content is in English) being good examples.

With regard to time spent on **checking translations** and other tasks relating to Agency documents, again there are considerable differences between the amounts of time spent by different FOPs. Some spend no time on this at all whereas in other cases this can take up 50% of their time. Some possible explanations for these differences were highlighted in the interviews with the FOPs:

- Firstly, there seem to be differences in the quality of the translated materials received by FOPs in different countries, which means that some have more work to do in checking documents than others;

- Secondly, differences exist in how some FOPs tackle translation tasks (in particular, some FOPs are able to share this work with other FOPs where there is a common language);

- Last but not least, some host institutions have translation services to carry out the work so that the FOP does not spend as much time on this him/herself.

Some FOPs have developed arrangements with each other for **sharing the task of checking material** (i.e. where there is a common language – Austria and Germany, France

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and Belgium, etc) and others have appointed language experts to undertake the work for them. Although translations are generally available promptly, the service provided by the Translation Centre is considered to be relatively expensive and there has been a lot of criticism of the quality, albeit in part due to the often highly technical content of the material.

Several FOPs have tried to work directly with the **Translation Centre** to resolve problems. For example, one FOP visited the Translation Centre to discuss the service provided and since then there has been informal contact with the translation staff and several documents have been returned to Luxembourg with the FOP's corrections. However, other FOPs complain of the unwillingness of the Translation Centre to take on board comments concerning terminology.

Overall, the quality of work undertaken by the Translation Centre is now improving although it is still seen by most FOPs to be unsatisfactory. Ideally, the arrangement with the Translation Centre should be more flexible, and direct contacts between FOPs and the Translation Centre encouraged, so that FOPs can discuss issues with its staff to ensure that translations are technically correct. But most FOPs would prefer to have more scope for using local translation services (this is done by at least one other EU-supported agency – see Section 5). Contracting some aspects of the work out to **private sector translation agencies** in the various countries might be cheaper than current arrangements but for the Agency a disadvantage is that this could mean having to manage 19 different contracts. Options such as these are, however, precluded under the Agency's Regulation (Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94 states that the translation services are to be "provided by the Translation Centre for the bodies of the Union"). The possibility of outsourcing the checking of translations, or of enabling board members to have more of a say over which particular materials need to be translated into their particular national language, might also be considered.

It is interesting to note that FOPs' time is largely taken up by tasks relating to the promotion of the Agency's activities in their countries (such as the organisation of activities, checking documents to be distributed etc.) whereas the provision of information to the Agency (in terms of consultation etc.) takes up a much smaller proportion of the FOPs' time.

3.1.3 Resources Available to FOPs

FOPs have varying levels of **human and other resources** available to them. In terms of human resources, a distinction needs to be made between:

- **Staff directly available to the FOP** for day-to-day tasks (e.g. to provide administrative support);

- **Experts** and others who are available as and when necessary to help respond to Agency requests for information;

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- The wider group of **network partners** (e.g., those who help with the implementation of European Week campaigns).

In the survey work we asked FOPs to indicate how many other people were available to assist them. The distinction between the various categories listed above is not clear-cut. However, the following analysis summarises the support *directly* available to FOPs. The table below shows the variation in the number of other staff available to help FOPs in carrying out their function.

Table 3.4: Number of other staff available to help with FOP function
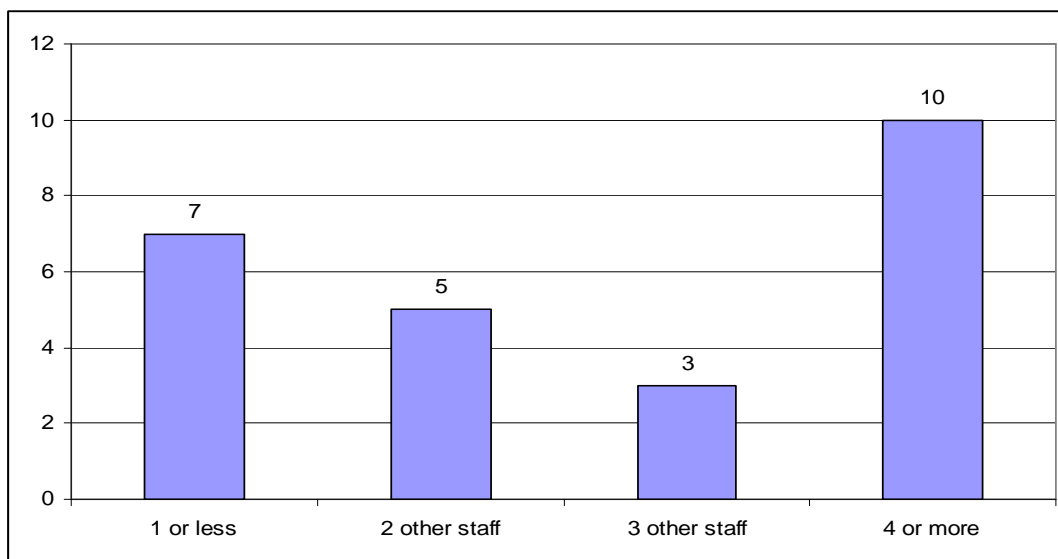
Source: FOP survey

As the analysis shows, many FOP managers (7 out of the EU25) perform this function entirely on their own; in other cases, the FOPs function is undertaken with two people on a part time basis (FR, GR); elsewhere, the FOP function is better resourced - a large number (10) have direct access to a number of other staff to provide support, either on a part-time or full-time basis. A number of FOPs have outsourced some of their activities, typically the website management. As noted earlier, in Ireland, the FOP function as a whole has been outsourced to a Euro Info Centre.

The **resources that are available to FOPs** undoubtedly have an impact on their ability to undertake FOP functions effectively. In the survey, FOPs were asked about whether they have sufficient time to undertake the FOP tasks. As can be seen, FOP opinions are fairly evenly divided on this question.

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Table 3.5: Do you have enough time to undertake FOP tasks?

Response	Number	%
Yes	11	44.0
No	12	48.0
No response	2	8.0
Total	**23**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

3.2 FOP Consultation Procedures and Inputs to the Agency's Strategy

An important role of the FOPs and their network partners is to provide information that can be used to help inform the Agency's strategy and work programmes.

This sub-section examines the Agency's consultation procedures both in relation to this question and with regard to the tasks that FOPs are expected to perform. Two questions from the terms of reference for this evaluation are especially relevant:

- *To what extent has the involvement of the FOPs and their networks in the preparation of the work programmes ensured that the objectives identified in the Agency's work programmes are in line with the needs of the intended beneficiaries of the activities?*

- *To what extent does the involvement of the FOPs and their networks in the preparation of the work programme support coherence between the objectives of Agency activities and national activities?*

3.2.1 FOP Cooperation Agreement

The Cooperation Agreement and the FOP Working Plans provide a framework for the relationship between the FOPs and the Agency. As can be seen from the following table, the Cooperation Agreement, which was introduced in 2006 for the first time, is generally consider to provide an appropriate framework for the carrying out of FOP functions.

Table 3.6: In your view, do the Cooperation Agreement and extranet work plans provide an appropriate framework for carrying out FOP functions at a national level?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	21	84.0
No	3	12.0
Don't know	0	0.0
No response	1	4.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

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These findings are generally supported by the interview programme. As one FOP put it: 'the Cooperation Agreement with the European Agency is a tool that gives more credibility to our activities and helps to get more financial support from the national authority'.

FOPs were also asked about whether sufficient opportunities exist to discuss the Cooperation Agreement with the Agency. The responses to this question are summarised in the table below.

Table 3.7: Do you have sufficient opportunities to discuss the Cooperation Agreement and specific tasks, timescales, etc?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	16	64.0
No	4	16.0
Don't know	4	16.0
No response	1	4.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

Although the Cooperation Agreement is generally felt to provide an appropriate framework, the late of signing of this document, as well as the limited time available to discuss specific tasks, were the subject of less favourable comments. For example, one FOP noted that:

> "When we received the Cooperation Agreement and Annex for 2006 on 22 December 2005 there was no information in the Annex on timescales - only a very short description of the tasks. We received the electronic version of the work plan 20 January after signing the agreement. It is too late."

However, the majority of FOPs (64%) indicated that sufficient opportunities existed to discuss the Cooperation Agreement and specific tasks with the Agency.

3.2.2   Preparation of the Agency's Work Programme

The Agency's annual Work Programme provides the overall framework for the Agency's activities and is central to the relationship between the FOPs and the Agency. FOPs were asked whether they have sufficient opportunities to help define the objectives and priorities of the Work Programme. The responses are presented in the table below.

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Table 3.8: Do you have sufficient opportunities to help define the objectives and priorities in the Work Programme?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	18	72.0
No	5	20.0
Don't know	1	4.0
No response	1	4.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

As can be seen, according to the survey results most FOPs consider that they have sufficient opportunities to help define the objectives and priorities of the Work Programme.

However, during the interview programme, some FOPs voiced a concern that there were not enough opportunities for them to assist in **defining the objectives and priorities of the Work Programme, and** that when they do make their views known to the Agency, these do not seem to be taken into account (e.g. with regard to European Week campaign materials). In the table below, a more detailed breakdown of the FOPs' views concerning opportunities to influence the strategic planning process is provided. This highlights the proportion of FOPs indicating that there is scope to make a 'major contribution' to particular aspects of strategic planning.

Figure 3.2: To what extent have you been able to contribute to the strategic planning process that underpins the Agency's annual Work Programme?

Source: FOP survey

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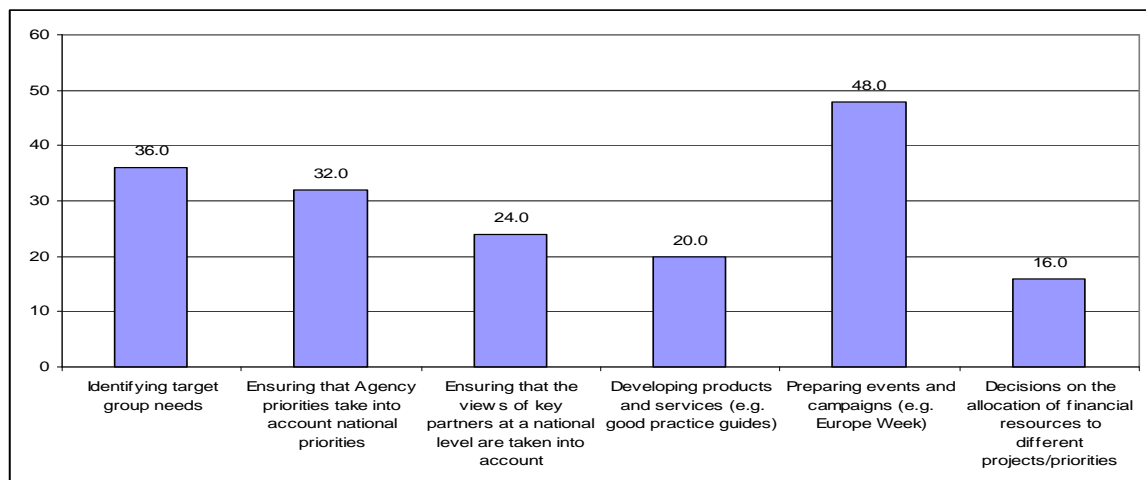
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As is clear from the analysis, **preparing events and campaigns** are the aspects of the Agency's strategic planning where the FOPs feel they can have the most influence. Over a third of the FOPs consider that they also can make a major contribution to **identifying target group needs** and a reasonably high proportion also consider this to be the case with regard to ensuring that Agency priorities take into account **national priorities**. The survey work suggests that there is far less scope for FOPs to influence the Agency's strategic plans in other fields - ensuring that the **views of key partners at national level** are taken into account, the **allocation of financial resources** to different projects or priorities, etc. It should be noted that decisions on the Agency's budget have so far been taken by the Board following a proposal by the Agency. The focal points have not been involved in the preparation of the budget.

In addition to having a possible direct influence on the Agency's strategic planning, FOPs have the possibility of exerting some influence through the **Board members** from their countries. This raises the question of whether contacts at national level between FOPs and Board members are sufficiently close for the Board member to be able to communicate national priorities as viewed by the FOPs. Several FOPs argued that this is not the case. But some suggested that this did not matter because, in their view at least, development of the Agency work programme is more a matter for the Board while FOPs should concentrate on implementing it.

From a FOP perspective, another important question is how flexible the Agency's **strategic planning procedures** are and, in particular, whether there is sufficient scope to adjust tasks/objectives during the course of implementing actions if changing circumstances suggest that changes are needed. Here, the views of the FOPs were generally more critical, as summarised in the table below.

Table 3.9: Do you think there is sufficient flexibility in the procedures for strategic planning and preparation of the Agency's annual Work Programme For example, if circumstances change at national level, can priorities and plans be easily changed?

Responses	Number	%
There is sufficient flexibility	8	32.0
Not enough flexibility	11	44.0
Don't know	4	16.0
No response	2	8.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

Overall, 44% of the FOPs argued that there is not enough flexibility in the procedures for strategic planning and preparation of the Agency's annual Work Programme. One FOP suggested that the situation might be improved with a review six months into the year; others argued for more transparency in the decision making system generally. Against

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this, work programmes, and the financial commitments and contracting procedures that underpin them, clearly need to be decided well in advance. Similarly, the Agency is bound by the constraints of the European Commission's Financial Regulation.

An important consideration applying to all the questions discussed in this section is the extent to which **FOPs from the EU10 Member States** have developed the capacity to make an input to the preparation of the Agency's work programmes, specifically with regard to identifying the needs of target groups in their countries. In many of the EU10 countries, FOP networks are still relatively weak – reflecting institutional weaknesses generally – and this means that it is difficult to obtain the inputs at a national level that are needed for the FOPs to play a proactive role at a European level.

The extent to which FOPs from the EU15 and EU10 countries feel able to contribute to the Agency's strategic planning processes is summarised in the table below (this highlights the percentage of FOPs who felt that they can make a 'major contribution').

Figure 3.4: To what extent have you been able to contribute to the strategic planning process that underpins preparation of the Agency's annual Work Programme ('major contribution')?
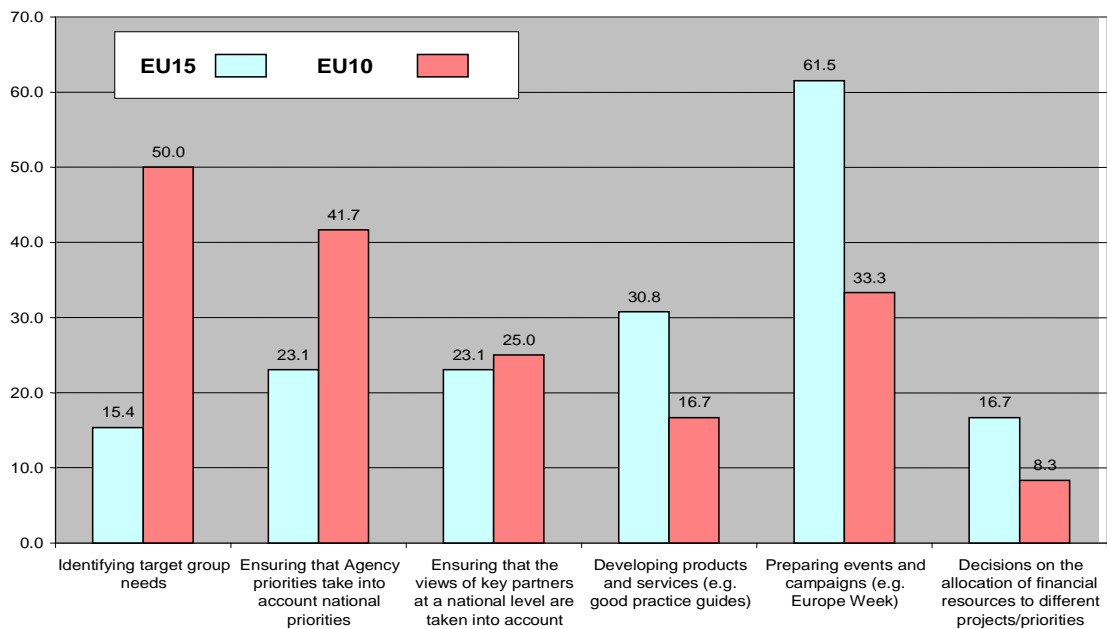
Source: FOP survey

As the table above makes clear, there is quite a mixed picture:

- The most scope for making an input to strategic planning is seen as lying in the identification of target group needs (where the 50% for EU10 countries compares

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with only 15% for the EU15 FOPs) and ensuring that Agency priorities take into account national priorities;

- However, with regard to contribution to the practical outputs and activities of the Agency, a smaller proportion of the EU10 FOPs consider that they have been able to make a major contribution (e.g. preparing events and campaigns, where 61.5% of EU15 FOPs indicated that they have been able to make a significant contribution compared with 33.3% of EU10 FOPs);

- Overall, therefore, EU10 FOPs seem better able to make a contribution on the 'input' side in their relationship with the Agency than on the 'output' side.

Some FOPs from EU10 Member States voiced concern that they still feel less well-placed to express their ideas in **FOP meetings**, a situation attributed to being the newer members. However, it is important to note that these differences do not coincide with FOPs from the new and old Member States: some FOPs also felt that a divide exists between FOPs within the EU15, particularly between those who have acted in the FOP role for a long period of time and those who are new to the work. For those who have been involved with the Agency for a long period of time, the relationship is stronger.

3.3   FOPs and the National Networks

As noted earlier, an important part of the FOP function is to develop networks at a national and regional level that can be mobilized to help inform the Agency's strategy and deliver its products and services.

3.4.1   Size and Composition of National Networks

The national networks are based on the tripartite structure but also incorporate varying numbers of these and other partners. Across EU Member States, a 'best estimate' is that there are approaching 800 network partners. The size and composition of the national networks reflects a number of factors:

- In some countries, there a long **tradition of joint working** between social partners and strong networks generally through which OSH can be promoted;

- Elsewhere, including most of the EU10 Member States, these **structures are still very much in the process of being developed.** Indeed, in many of these countries (and several 'old' Member States), it is the FOP function itself that is acting as a catalyst and driver for the development of networks;

- Another factor influencing the composition of national networks and their capacity to deliver Agency priorities is the **extent of centralization/decentralization in governmental structures** generally and in the field of OSH in particular.

A summary analysis of the size and composition of national networks is provided below. This is based on information provided by FOPs to the Agency with some modifications to

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take inot account the feedback from our own research.

Table 3.10 : Nature and Size of National Networks

EU Member States	Public Authorities	Employer Reps	Worker Reps	Other Partners	Total
Austria	2	2	3	16	**23**
Belgium	11	4	4	18	**37**
Cyprus	3	4	5	2	**14**
Czech Rep.	16	1	1	1	**19**
Germany	8	1	1	3	**13**
Denmark	9	19	19	24	**71**
Estonia	13	1	1	9	**24**
Spain	27	4	4	20	**55**
Finland	17	4	3	14	**38**
France	5	5	5	5	**20**
Greece	9		1	10	**20**
Hungary	2	1	1	5	**9**
Ireland	1	6	3	10	**20**
Italy	18	13	12	51	**94**
Lithuania	12	4	3	9	**28**
Luxembourg	3	3	3	16	**25**
Latvia	5	1	1	1	**8**
Malta	9	4	7	8	**28**
Netherlands	2	3	3	5	**13**
Poland	No breakdown available				**38**
Portugal	No breakdown available				**48**
Sweden	8	4	5	3	**20**
Slovenia	4	5	6	22	**37**
Slovakia	16	6	10	35	**67**
UK	1	1	1	0	**3**
Totals	**201**	**97**	**101**	**287**	**772**

Source: CSES analysis of Agency information

The analysis shown above is limited to network partners that have an on-going invovement in FOP activities in the various countries. It does not take into account the many additional organisations that are involved in particular activities such as the European Week campaigns. There are a number of observations to be made:

- **Public authorities** – these include national authorities responsible for OSH as well as other entitities such as OSH agencies and insitutes, and regional authorities in countries where responsibilities mainly lie with regional authorities (e.g. Germany, Spain);

- **Employer and employee representatives** – in some countries, there are relatively

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few orgaisations represnting employers and unions whereas elsewhere structures are much more fragmented;

• **Other network partners** – this category embraces a very wide range of organisations including OSH professionals, universities and research institutes, the media, etc.

Overall governmental structures are an important factor influencing the size and composition of national networks and where OSH responsibilities have been devolved to regional administrations, relatively large networks often exist (e.g. Spain). But this is not the case in all countries with federal systems. An overall pattern is difficult to discern.

3.4.2 Relationship between FOPs and National Partners

Given the limited financial and human resources available to FOPs, successful delivery of the Agency's programme depends very much on the strength of national networks. Network partners are not only important as a source of **support for the FOP function** itself but also vital as **channels of communication with the key target groups**, in particular the workplaces. In effect, network partners provide a 'multiplier' mechanism through which OSH promotional efforts can be channeled to reach large numbers of SMEs and workplaces.

The following analysis summarises the views of FOPs on their relationship with network partners in their countries. The analysis highlights the proportion of FOPs stating that their relationship is 'excellent'.

Table 3.11: FOPs - How well developed is your relationship with network partners?

Support of network partners	Number	%
Social partner organisations	7	62.5
National authorities	12	76.0
OSH specialists and agencies	7	50.0
Employer organisations	6	68.0
Trade unions	6	64.0
Universities and research bodies	7	56.0

Source: FOP survey. Note: other response options were 'quite good' and 'poor'.

As can be seen, the relationship with network partners is generally thought to be good by FOPs. This applies especially to **national authorities**, which is not surprising given earlier findings on the support provided by host organisations. There are similarly positive findings with regard to the relationship with **social partners**. The two kinds of partners with whom relationships are not perceived to be quite as good are **OSH specialists** and **universities and research bodies.** This was a concern that was also raised by some FOPs during interviews. There are also relatively weak links with workplace health promotion bodies despite the fact that these bodies have an obvious interest in promoting improved healt hand safety at work.. Two exceptions are Austria and Germany where this function is undertaken

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by statutory insurance organisations, and in both cases there is an active involvement in Agency related tasks by these organisations. Elsewhere, however, where the private sector is generally responsible for workplace health insurance, the organisations concerned are not integrated into national networks. A wider question here is the extent to which it is feasible for national networks to attract private sector companies (i.e. not just health insurance providers) as members. When **network partners** were asked about the strength of their relationship with FOPs, the views on the relationship were generally not as positive as those expressed by FOPs.

Table 3.12: Network Partners - How well developed is your relationship with FOPs?

Relationship with FOP	Excellent		Quite good		Poor	
	Number	%	Number	Number	%	Number
Public authorities	22	62.9	12	34.3	1	2.9
OSH specialists	5	45.5	4	36.4	2	18.2
Trade unions	1	11.1	7	77.8	1	11.1
Employer organisations	7	53.8	6	46.2	0	0.0
Other	6	50.0	5	41.7	1	8.3
Total	**41**	**51.3**	**34**	**42.5**	**5**	**6.3**

Source: survey feedback from network partners

However, there are significant differences between countries in the perceived strength of the relationships between network partners and FOPs. The **EU10/EU15 FOPs' views** on their relationships with network partners are summarised in the chart below.

Figure 3.5: Relationships with network partner ('excellent' ratings)
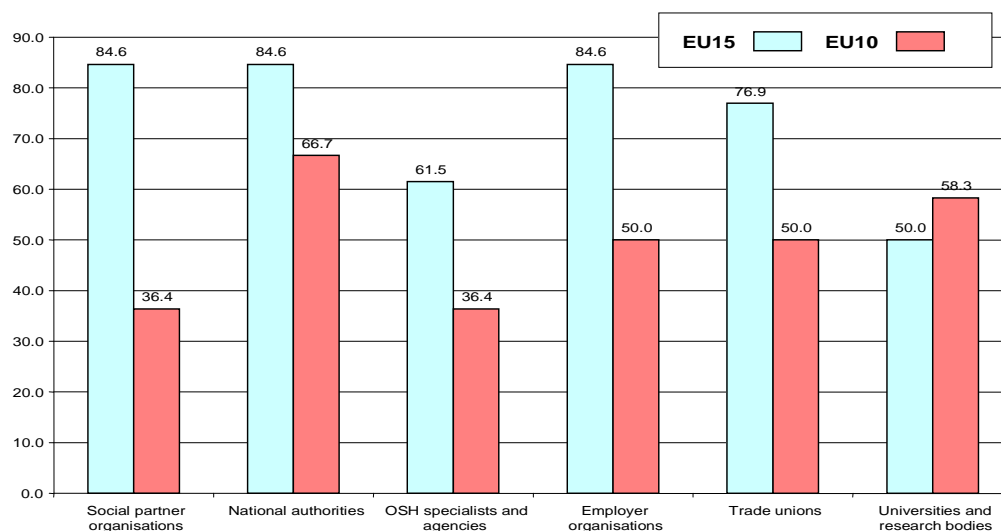
Source: FOP and network partner surveys

As the above analysis makes clear, FOPs from the EU15 generally have stronger relationships with most of their different types of network partners (the exception is

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universities and research bodies). This is particularly obvious in the strength of relationships with social partner organisations - while 84.6% of EU15 FOPs consider this relationship to be excellent, only 36.4% of EU10 FOPs hold this view. The following provides examples of the different national structures and practices with regard to the national networking.

Table 3.6: Examples of National Networking

DK: A change of structure has taken place, introducing a better organised and balanced network. An 18 member large Network Steering Group consists of equal representation from employer and the worker side, OSH authorities and research-based organisations.

ES: The FOP coordinates a network of social and other network partners, and a committee meets on a regular basis.

FR: Formalised collaboration takes place within the *Commission paritaire 'Information/Formation',* a committee made up of some 20 members with equal representation of social partners. On a more informal daily basis, the FOP works with social partners on the ground and with different OSH organisations, scientific organisations, the work inspectorate and the *caisses maladie.*

HU: There is very close professional cooperation between the FOP and the representatives of the social partners and others who have responsibility for OSH matters. Social partners act as sub-focal points, i.e. they take an active role in distribution of the materials and dissemination of best practice. Contrary to the experience of some other NMS, employers' associations and trade unions play an important role in the implementation of Agency supported activities in Hungary.

IR: A national network of 25 partners and a few representatives from the HSA, meets four times a year. To engage participants more, others in the organisation have been asked to participate as substitutes.

LT: Social partners in Lithuania provide only limited support to the FOP in carrying out the Agency' work programme. With a few exceptions (the national authorities are regarded as supportive), the involvement of the partners is considered to be rather passive, not going much beyond participation in meetings.

LU: The national network is composed of approximately ten members. There are six key members. The network meets three times a year which is seen as a useful networking activity since the ministerial tripartite body does not meet on a regular basis.

PT: a close relationship exists between social partners in Portugal who have responsibility for OSH matters. FOP has played an important role in facilitating joint working between social partners in an uncertain environment with continual changes in institutional structures. This is reinforced by the fact that OSH is one of only two policy areas where national agreements have been signed by the social partners.

PL: the national network composed of 36 partners. The partners are considered to contribute positively to the FOP's activities and the Institute traditionally collaborates particularly closely with companies, including the co-ordination of a 'Safe Work Forum', consisting of 91 enterprises.

SL: OSH network is relatively large with 25 members (and other organisations involved on an ad hoc basis in specific activities, e.g. the education sector in the EW2006 campaign). Network partners are seen as being quite active, partly reflecting the fact that Slovenia has had a relatively strong emphasis on the promotion of OSH over many years. A good relationship between the social partners and the FOP exists with close consultation over a range of issues. An intranet function is used to promote interaction between the FOP and the network. In addition to dissemination of information, the intranet is used to assist the decision making process.

SE: The national network consists of approximately 20 members who meet five or six times a year. The network is based on the core tripartite group, but all interested organisations are invited to participate, with particular working groups being formed to deal with certain issues.

SK: The national network, or 'steering committee', consists of nearly 60 representatives of different organisations, and meets three times a year. Apart from attending the meetings the network does not make a particularly active contribution to FOP work. Due to its size, the committee cannot easily focus on practical questions to do with FOP activities.

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3.4.3: Contribution of Network Partners to Agency Work Programme

In addition to perceptions concerning relationships between FOPs and network partners, respondents to all three surveys (FOPs, network partners, end users) were asked to give a view on the contribution of different network partners to implementing the Agency's work programme. The combined results are presented in the figure below.

Figure 3.7: Support provided by network partners to successfully implement the Agency's Work Programme ('Excellent' Ratings)
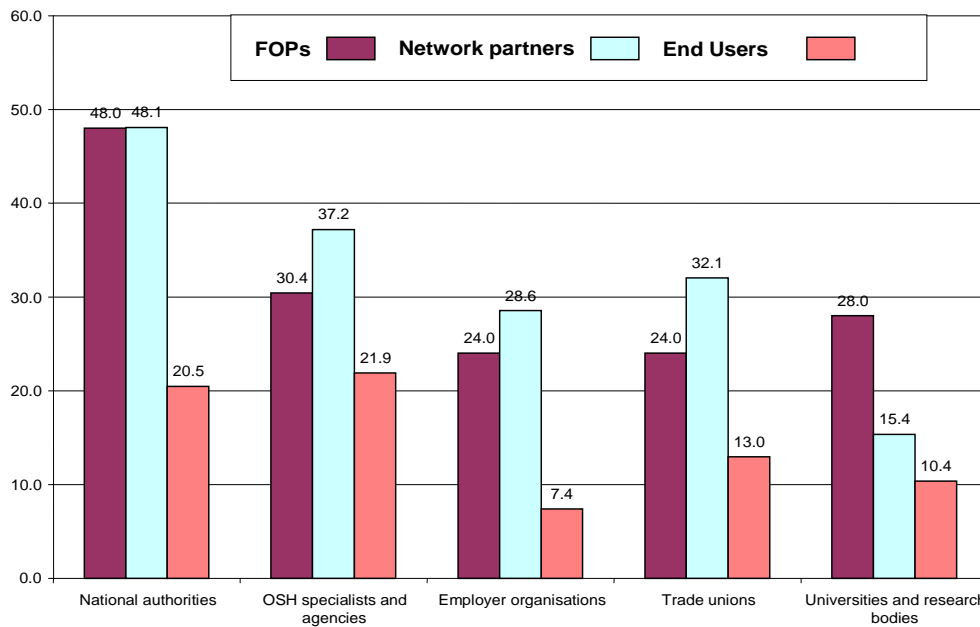
Source: Survey feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users

FOPs and Board members have probably the most complete overview of the level of support provided by different organisations to the Agency's work Programme. Network partners and end users are arguably less well placed to judge the contribution of others because in many cases they have only a partial involvement in Agency-related activities. Notwithstanding this:

- It is clear that **national authorities** are seen to provide the most support, with nearly half of FOPs (48%) and network partners (48%), and many Board members (40%) considering this support to be 'excellent'.

- **OSH specialists and agencies** also provide important support with this being described as 'excellent' by 30.4% of FOPs, 37.2% of network partners and 31% of Board members;

- With **trade unions and employer organisations**, 32% of network partners consider

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the support to be 'excellent' but the views of FOPs, Board members and end users are more mixed.

Seen from a different perspective, it is clear that network partners tend to be the most positive in their views about the role of different organisations, followed by FOPs, while end users generally have far less positive views.

Overall, it is clear that there are very **varying levels of engagement by the network partners** with regard to participation in meetings, providing information and contributing to the organisation of events, etc. Much inevitably depends on personal relationships, and the **tradition in different countries of institutional cooperation**.

However, there are some general conclusions that can be highlighted. Firstly, having too large a network can hamper its effectiveness. Many FOPs have created working groups to prepare for the European Week and other particular activities. This can facilitate network partner engagement and also enable the inclusion of expert organisations for particular topics. Secondly, network members can be encouraged to nominate a substitute to attend in cases where it is not possible for the member to participate. Further, network members who do not tend to participate in meetings can be asked to nominate another person from their organisation to take their place.

3.4   Horizontal Dimension - Networking between FOPs

Networking between FOPs should clearly help maximise the performance of the network by promoting joint working (e.g. on translation work) and a sharing of good practices. In the terms of reference for the evaluation, the question posed was: what is the extent and impact of focal point – focal point cooperation?

3.4.1   Nature and Extent of Networking between FOPs

In addition to the FOP meetings organised by the Agency three times a year, and other supporting activities, contact and joint working between the FOPs themselves should be an important and dynamic feature of the network. The research suggests that:

- The **extent of networking** is difficult to gauge, partly due to the many forms that it takes but approximately two-thirds of the FOPs appear to have developed on-going links with other FOPs;

- Cooperation between FOPs can be broadly divided into two types**: joint working on particular tasks** (e.g. translation of European Week campaign materials) and, secondly, and more **informal and less focused networking** (e.g. informal networking at FOP meetings, extranet communications, bilateral contacts);

- Differing **OSH frameworks and practices** are an important factor that influences the extent of networking. In particular, where these practices are relatively strong,

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there is less incentive to develop cross-border links although most FOPs recognize that they have a role to play in transferring know-how.

From the results of the interview programme, some of the less developed aspects of networking between members of the FOP network are highlighted. Where cooperation does take place it is mostly in connection with translation tasks. The chart below highlights the various forms of joint working.

Figure 3.8: Main types of contact with other FOPs
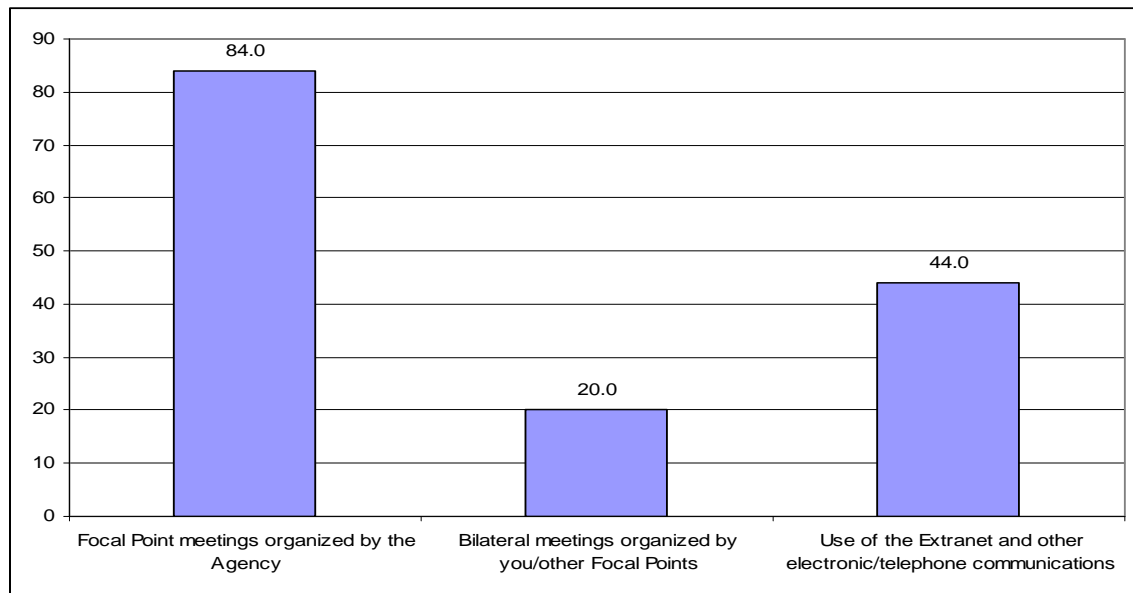
Source: FOP survey

As the survey results make clear, FOP meetings organised by the Agency are considered to be most important way in which FOPs network with each other followed by electronic methods. Bilateral meetings organised by FOPs themselves are seen as being far less important. Whether this is because few meetings of this kind take place, or because these kinds of meetings are not considered effective as a way of working together, is not clear.

With regard to **factors influencing the extent of networking**, some FOPs indicated during interviews that the differing OSH frameworks and practices meant that the value of networking was heavily diminished because of a tendency to approach issues from a national perspective (this is generally the case particularly when national OSH structures were considered to be well developed). Some FOPs value networking most on a regional basis, perhaps due to similarities on OSH cultures and, at times, in languages. However, many considered networking and the exchange of experiences to be not only the most important function of the FOP network, but rather something that the Agency itself should promote.
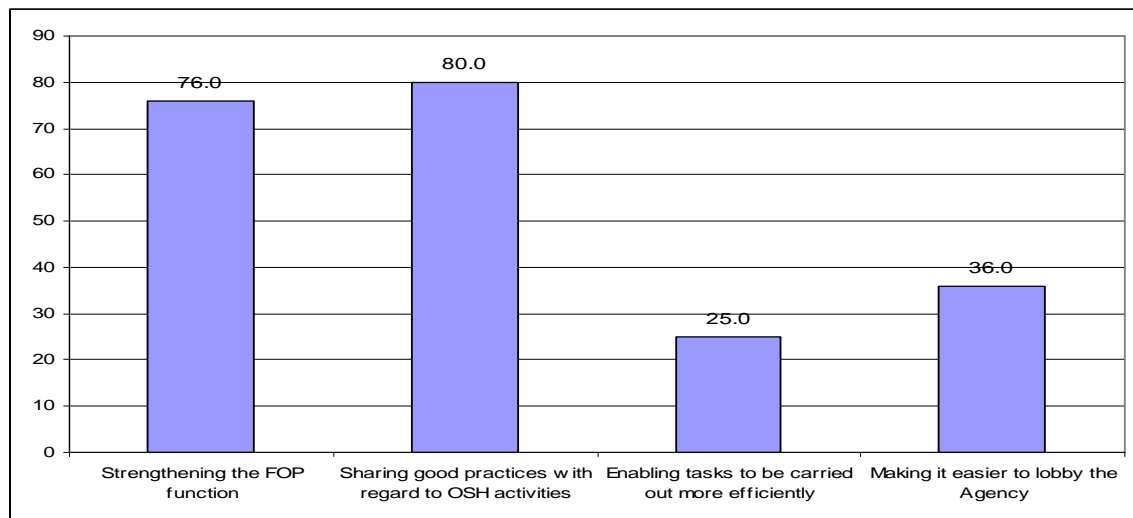
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3.4.2   Benefits of FOP Networking

The benefits of networking are widely acknowledged. FOP views on these benefits are summarised below (it should be noted that only the proportion stating that the different benefits are 'very important' is shown).

Figure 3.9: What do you see as being the main benefits of FOP networking?

Source: FOP survey

The **exchange of information** and **collaboration with regard to translation work** are the most frequently mentioned forms of trans-national collaboration. There are many examples of collaboration on the translation of Agency materials (e.g. between Austria/Germany, Belgium/France, and brochures produced in Poland and Sweden have been translated and reprinted in Lithuania and Estonia respectively). Other FOPs recognise that potential for this kind of collaboration exists, but is not fully taken advantage of it.

Apart form the cases where there is joint working on translation activities, a good example of FOP collaboration is in **Belgium** where the FOP is planning a colloquium for the closing event of EW2006 (to take place in 2007) to which FOPs from France, Netherlands and Luxembourg will be invited with the purpose of sharing good practices. Such exchanges are seen as particularly valuable with these countries due to similar OSH practices and common languages, which makes communication easier. In **Portugal**, the Focal Point also works closely with a number of other countries focusing on sharing good practices and the translation of campaign materials. In **France**, the FOP has close relations with the FOP in **Italy**. The **UK** FOP co-operates on policy work on a job-specific basis with countries that have common interests. Contacts are particularly good with counterparts from **Denmark**, the **Netherlands**, **Sweden** and **Germany**, while contacts with new Member States (e.g. **Malta**) are more over the provision of information and advice. Specific 'study visits' have

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also been undertaken, with the FOP from **Poland**, for example, having a meeting at the UK Health and Safety Executive to discuss experiences. In addition, contacts covering certain regions, particularly between EU10 countries, have been fostered – many consider that due to the similar challenges, networking between FOPs from EU10 Member States are the most important.

Reflecting this, when asked about possible ways to improve networking, many FOPs argue that there should be more possibilities for increased **bilateral and regional meetings** and contacts between FOPs. One suggestion is that the location of FOP meetings organised by the Agency should be held on a **rotating basis** in different countries as this would allow the FOPs to learn more about each other's work. It is worth pointing out that many connections between FOPs have been fostered **independently of Agency-related activities**. A number of FOPs have developed links with their counterparts in other countries which are not always related to the FOP system (as the FOP network consists of many different kinds of actors).

3.5   European Week Campaigns

One of the key roles of FOPs, and which is also emphasised in the Agency's strategy *Preparing for Enlargement: Proposal for a 2nd generation Agency Network*, is to help coordinate European Week campaigns in their countries. European Week campaigns have been subject to separate evaluation exercises. However, in this section we highlight findings with a particular bearing on the role of FOPs.

As noted earlier, **organising activities for the European Week campaigns** takes up a significant proportion of FOP time and resources. Although the survey results from the end users show a mixed picture, the campaigns are also widely regarded as being a successful method of communicating OSH issues from a European perspective to OSH intermediaries and, to a somewhat more limited extent, to the end users. In the most recent evaluation of a European Week Campaign (*Evaluation of European Week 2005: Stop that Noise.* CSES, 2006), questions regarding the effectiveness of the campaign, the **role of FOPs and the Agency**, and of the campaign format and strategy in general, have been evaluated in more detail. Overall, however, there is strong support amongst FOPs for the European Week (EW) campaigns which are seen as being one of the most effective ways available to the Agency for promoting OSH issues.

3.5.1   Thematic or Sectoral EW Campaign Focus?

A key question with regard to the EW campaign is whether it should be essentially sector-focused or thematically orientated. Most FOPs seem to agree that the topics for the European Week campaigns have been well chosen in past years. As argued in the EW2005 evaluation, differing approaches have advantages and disadvantages:

- With a sector-based approach, key social/network partners whose support is needed

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to run an effective campaign can be more easily identified;

- Similarly, the limited scope of a sector-based campaign means that (in theory at least) it should be possible to focus efforts more and thereby achieve greater impacts;

- On the other hand, a thematically-orientated EW campaign has wider relevance, is more inclusive in terms of network partners and does not preclude sector-specific actions.

Of the six EW campaigns so far organised, all but one (EW2004 on construction) have been thematically orientated. However, even in **theme-based campaigns** there has tended to be some sectoral targeting. Opinions amongst FOPs are somewhat divided with regard to the benefits of focusing on **particular sectors** (e.g. construction). However, most FOPs and national partners argue that a broader theme is preferable since having a sectoral theme means that the momentum of a yearly campaign can be lost for some target groups. Wider themes generally work better and also ensure that a broader target group of beneficiaries can be included. A broader theme can also be tailored so as to focus on certain sectors most at risk and this way some of the benefits of a sectoral campaign can also be harnessed.

Many FOPs also argue that closer collaboration with **SLIC campaigns** should be encouraged, so as to ensure that there are no overlaps, and that possible synergies can be exploited as efficiently as possible. This is seen, however, as also having certain difficulties. For example, following the collaboration in 2007, in Sweden it has been decided that it is not possible to organise two inspection campaigns, and so an element of the European Week campaign has effectively been lost.

Bearing these factors in mind, the 'best of both worlds' would be to combine theme-based EW campaigns with a sectoral focus. The way in which this is implemented can be left to a certain extent up to FOPs so as to take account of situations in different countries. The capacity to do this depends, however, on being able to identify the types of businesses (and socio-economic groups) especially at risk from a particular safety and health problem. Network partners clearly have an important role in this respect because they should be well-placed to identify the sectors concerned in their countries. At the same time, even a sectoral focus can be tailored so as to be of more general interest. However, in order to ensure that this can be done, a number of FOPs argue that guidance on how to tailor the campaign t different target groups should be provided by the Agency, and that there should be a further sharing of ideas and experiences between FOPs themselves.

3.5.2   Timing and Duration of the EW Campaign

There are differing views amongst FOPs and network partners on the ideal timing and duration of EW campaigns. For example, while one FOP felt that a 'European Day' might be more appropriate as a way of focusing efforts, others argue that a 'European Week' allows a wider range of activities to be undertaken, particularly as the same experts often speak in

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different events (for example, in Finland, EW events tend to spread throughout the autumn).

At present European Week campaigns overlap. The annual **periodicity of the EW campaigns** is perceived as causing some problems to FOPs, as there is never enough time to follow up the results of a particular campaign before it is time to start planning the next. An alternative supported by many FOPs is be to run each EW campaign over a two-year period. The main advantage of this approach is that it would mean that far more effort could be put into preparing the campaign (e.g. publicity), follow-up activities and reaching workplaces. The second year of the campaign could, for example, focus on the dissemination of good practices collected during the first year of the campaign. Different aspects of a particular theme could also be addressed in the two years. Last but not least, if the FOP subsidy scheme is linked to such a cycle, it would also resolve some of the difficulties involved in administering the current scheme.

For these and other reasons, most FOPs are in favour of introducing a **two-year cycle** for the EW. Normally the Agency reaches a decision on the EW campaign theme three years in advance, with the theme for 2008 being risk assessment. Therefore, if the case for a two-year cycle is accepted, it could be introduced for the 2009-10 period.

There are, however, arguments against a two-year EW campaigning period. Firstly, such an approach would obviously mean that a more limited number of themes could be tackled over a given period. Secondly, a lengthy campaigning period could lead to a degree of 'fatigue'. Thirdly, some of the momentum that has been built up with the annual campaigns could be lost. Finally, if a two-year campaign were to be adopted, and a more centralised EU level campaigning approach pursued, the effect of this on the role and national visibility of the FOPs, and consequently the Agency, should be taken into consideration. It was suggested by some FOPs that instead of simply extending the campaign, introducing certain important topics at regular intervals (e.g. every five years) could also be an efficient way to address questions.

Arguments also exist for **shortening the EW campaigning period**, and during the interview programme several FOPs and national partners suggested a 'European Month' or a 'European Year' with certain central highlights, instead of a European Week. This would, it is argued allow the FOPs more flexibility in their planning and would make it possible for different countries to combine activities in order to achieve a greater impact. The most radical suggestion in this respect is that 'European Week' should be replaced by a 'European Day' for safety and health at work with the timing perhaps brought forward to coincide with the ILO's Workers' Memorial Day (April each year). However, it is doubtful whether a day would provide sufficient time for the organisation of activities. This might also diminish the European nature of the campaign. Similarly, several FOPs pointed out that the traditional trade union focus of the International Workers Memorial Day might not encourage all parties to take part.

The question of **timing of the EW campaigns** during the year was also an issue brought up by many FOPs. Launching the campaign in June (when the campaign was launched in 2005)

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is seen to be a difficult time to start due to the summer holidays. In addition, the fact that the European Week takes place so late in the year is considered to be another factor complicating an appropriate follow up to the campaign. Thus, the possibility of moving the EW, or at least the launch event, to a time in the Spring is favoured by some FOPs.

3.6   National Websites

Another of the key tasks assigned to FOPs in the Agency's strategy *Preparing for Enlargement: Proposal for a 2ⁿᵈ generation Agency Network* involves developing and maintaining national websites.

National websites are linked to the Agency's website. The national websites are also central to the Agency's communication of information to the end users at national level, and indeed the external evaluation of the Agency from 2001 stated that the "most successful feature of the first phase has been establishing the Websites, which can be considered to be the state of the art".[4] During 2006, the EU-OSHA Member State and Network sites received 674,820 unique visitor, and 1,114,403 visits in total.[5]

From an FOP perspective, the Agency's website is an important source of information and, to varying degrees, the network websites make heavy use of the content. There are, however, differences in the presentation of and amount of information provided on the websites, as well as in how frequently the websites are visited.

3.6.1   Differences Between National Websites

Considerable resources are available for the development and maintenance of national websites. This includes the FOP subsidy which can be used for the purpose of funding the maintenance of the national website and in most countries this is the case.

With regard to the quality of OSH-related information available on the national websites and its presentation, as mentioned above, there are considerable variations:

- A number of national websites are updated on an almost weekly basis, while for others only a few updates a year appear to take place;

- While some national websites present news and a variety of current information, others concentrate on providing access to the Agency's materials. Also, some websites are not actively maintained and essentially consist of links to other national OSH websites;

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[4] *Does Information Communicate? Evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.* Social Development Co. February 2001
[5] *EU-OSHA Network Web Statistics Report 2006.* January 2007

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- The extent to which material is available in English and/or national languages also varies from one national website to another.

Taking the first point, there are also differences in the extent to which national information is available on the various websites. In some countries, the websites have a considerable amount of OSH information and this is seen, in the countries concerned (e.g. Germany and Latvia), as a main source and reference point. Thus, in **Latvia**, the national website is considered to be particularly important, as it is the only significant source of information on OSH issues in the country. Only approximately 20% of the material on the site is Agency material, the rest is from national sources. In a number of other countries, this is less so and the websites tend not to be seen as a gateway to the most important OSH information. However, this cannot deemed a direct consequence of the quality of the national EU-OSHA website themselves as in certain countries there are other, well-established, sources of information on OSH questions which can reduce the importance of the EU-OSHA site as a provider of national information (e.g. **UK, France**).

Although the target audience of the national sites tends to be the nationals of that country, an interesting approach has been adopted in **Sweden**. Here, all information on the website is provided in English. According to the FOP, national websites should be geared more towards providing OSH information about that particular country to people from elsewhere in Europe – and so information should be available principally in English.

3.6.2 Visits to National Websites

The Agency collects information on the numbers of visits to the national websites which indicates clear differences in the extent to which the different websites are used. The following table indicates the numbers of unique visitors, and the numbers of visits to national websites hosted by the Agency.

Table 3.10: Visits to National EU-OSHA websites 2006

MSW activity

M.E.	Unique visitors	Number of visits	M.E.	Unique visitors	Number of visits
at	19,511	26,697	lt	28,053	37,699
be	23,960	42,950	lu*	Not provided	
bg*	80,636	121,805	lt*	Not provided	
cy	3,731	7,035	lv*	Not provided	
cz*	Not provided	100,234	nl*	Not provided	
de	80,539	121,092	mt	4,212	8,140
dk*	Not provided		pl	74,213	101,032
ee	3,071	4,517	pt	30,278	38,895
es	125,623	180,972	ro*	Not provided	
fi	82,465	152,791	se	6,878	12,123
fr	14,424	20,816	si	22,510	33,091
gr	11,934	16,631	sk*	Not provided	
hu	31,310	42,150	uk	21,695	31,461
ie	9,777	14,272			

* Member States' websites are not hosted in the Agency.

Source: EU-OSHA Network Web Statistics Report 2006. January 2007

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Based on the number of visits to a particular site, normalized according to the size and internet population of a particular country, a ratio has been calculated to better compare the results from one member state to another (*EU-OSHA Network Web Statistics Report 2006*. January 2007). An overview of these results (for the countries for which information is available) is presented in the table below:

Figure 3.13: Ratio of visits to National Websites 2006
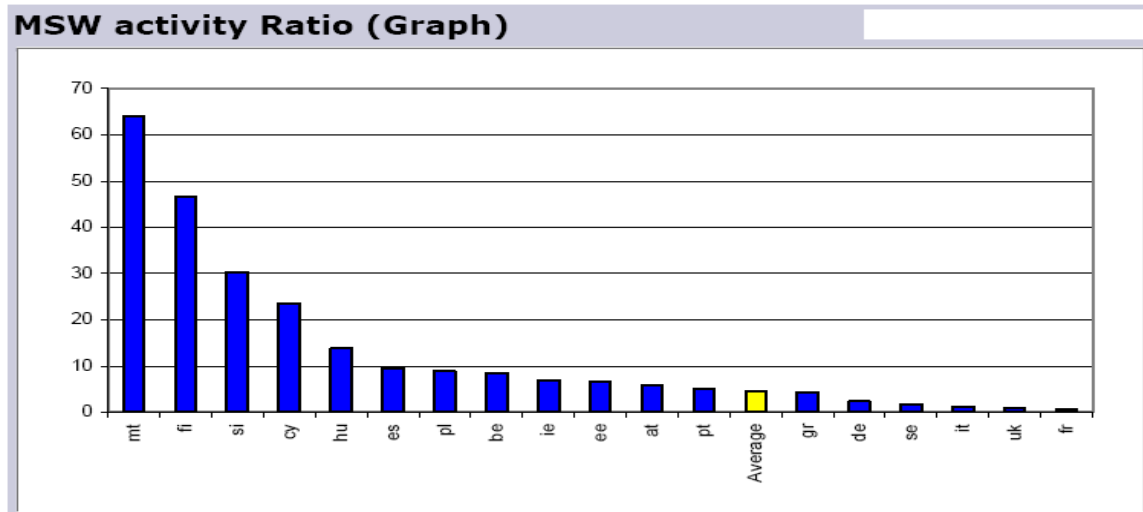
Source: EU-OSHA Network Web Statistics Report 2006. January 2007

As the figures presented in the table and graph above demonstrate, there are significant variations in the **frequency of visits to the national websites**. The results reflect to some degree the quality of information provided on the websites, language, usability of the websites, internet usage generally in different countries, as well as publicity given to website development by the FOP. It is important to note however, that a number of other factors are also likely to have a strong effect, ranging from the quality of other sources of national OSH information, to the numbers of national OSH professionals, and even the popularity of the EU generally.

Nevertheless, the variation in figures does support the argument that further development of national websites is needed in certain countries to make them useful sources of information on OSH. This has been identified as an area of improvement in the Agency's Work Programme for 2007, but it is clear that further work is required to determine how the national websites can add value to the information already available in some countries. It is interesting to observe that in Finland, for example, where important sources for OSH information outside the EU-OSHA website exist, the MSW activity ratio above is still very high. This may indicate that the high levels of publicity given to the website and European Week campaigns have increased the relevance of the website to end users.

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3.7 Summary – Role of the National Focal Points

Overall, the research confirms that FOPs and their networks play a key role in helping the Agency to achieve its mission. To summarise key points from this section:

- The role of FOPs and their capacity to promote the Agency's mission needs to be seen against the backdrop of national OSH structures and traditions.

- On average, the head of the FOP function spends around half of his/her time on Agency-related tasks but this varies considerably from one country to another.

- In general, the support provided by national authorities and host organisations to FOPs is regarded as adequate.

- FOPs have an important role in providing the information required by the Agency to define its work programme and strategy, and in ensuring that the Agency's aims are aligned with national priorities. However, this role could be developed.

- The extent to which FOPs are supported by network partners is critical to successful delivery of the Agency's objectives, and again this engagement could be further developed.

Role of the Agency

Overview

This section examines one of the key questions from the terms of reference, namely the Agency's role in supporting the focal points' and their networks' activities. There are a number of specific issues that the evaluation was required to address:

- *What has been the Agency's role in supporting the focal points' and their networks' activities?*

- *To what extent has the way Agency-focal point cooperation is organized contributed or hindered focal point contributions? This should also include an assessment of the focal points' possibility to take part in the planning process and the organisation of the implementation of Agency activities.*

- *How does Agency coordination of the network of focal points favour – or the contrary – an effective contribution from the focal points and their networks to the planning process?*

4.1   Types of Support Provided by the Agency to FOPs

The Agency's Bilbao office supports the FOPs and their networks in a number of ways:

- **Financial and technical support** for particular activities, in particular the European Week campaigns and national website development;

- **Provision of research, campaign materials and other information** on OSH issues for dissemination to target groups;

- **Coordination of networking and sharing of good practices** with regard to the FOP function itself and particular aspects of the remit.

As noted in Section 2, the Agency's Bilbao office has a Network Secretariat. The resources dedicated to directly coordinating network support are, however, modest with two staff members sharing this and other responsibilities (taken together, this amounts to the equivalent of about one full-time person). In addition, many of the Agency's other units are of course also engaged in providing support to the FOPs for particular activities and projects.

Feedback from the FOPs generally indicates that there is a very good **relationship between the FOPs and the Agency**. Although certain aspects of the relationship are criticised (see previous section), overall, the support of the Agency is highly valued. The following chart analyses FOP feedback on the role of the Agency in this respect.

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Figure 3.5: Types of Support received from the Agency ('Very Good' Responses)
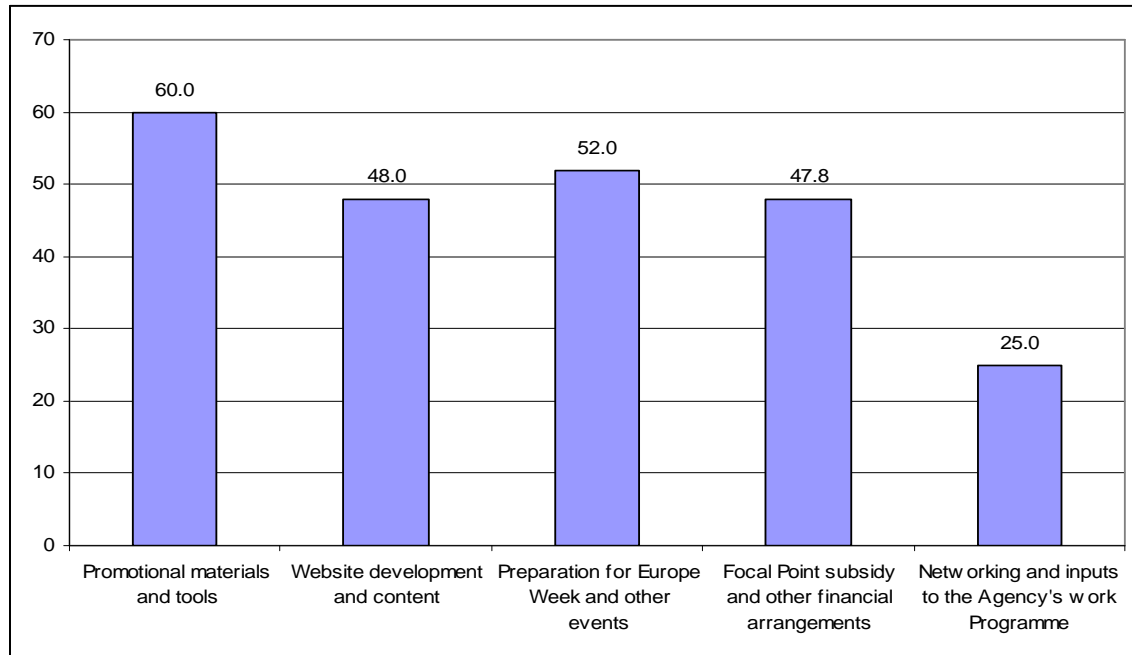
Source: FOP survey

The research suggests that:

- The support received from the Agency in terms of **promotional materials and tools** is considered by approaching two-thirds (60.0%) of FOPs to be 'very good' – indeed, none thought this to be 'very poor';

- Agency support to FOPs in preparing for **European Week and other events** is also positively regarded with 52% considering this to be 'very good' (most of the remainder - 45.8% - considered Agency support to be 'quite good');

- Similarly, in terms of **website development**, the views were fairly positive, with 48.0% saying that support in this area was 'very good'.

These are areas where Agency support is aimed at producing a particular end product, and the support is in a sense more tangible. When it comes to questions such as the FOP subsidy and financial arrangements, as well as networking and inputs to the Agency's work programme, views are more divided. These are also areas which are less directly practical in nature and entail communication over issues that are not substantive OSH questions relating to the Agency's mission.

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<div style="text-align: right">**4**</div>

4.2 Network Management and Relationship between the Agency Staff and FOPs

Notwithstanding the generally positive views, there is a widespread feeling that the relationship between the Agency and FOPs is not as strong as it used to be. To some extent, it could be argued that this is inevitable given EU enlargement.

As noted earlier, at an **operational level**, the working relationship between the staff from the Bilbao office and FOPs is generally seen as good. The FOPs were asked about their views on how responsive and supportive the Agency is. The analysis below suggests positive opinions. None of the FOPs thought that the Agency was not responsive or supportive at all.

Table 3.10: Overall, how responsive and supportive to FOPs is the Agency?

Responses	Number	%
Very supportive/responsive	14	56.0
Quite supportive/responsive	11	44.0
Not responsive/supportive at all	0	0.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

Turning to the formal framework, as highlighted in the previous section, most FOPs (62%) consider that sufficient opportunities existed to discuss the **Cooperation Agreement** and specific tasks set out in their work programmes with the Agency (17 % of the FOPs were of the opinion that this was not the case with the remainder unsure). On more specific issues, feedback from the survey work and interviews suggests that whilst there is adequate scope for FOPs to make an input to **preparing events and campaigns**, this is less so with more strategic issues – e.g. **identifying target group needs and in ensuring that Agency priorities take into account national priorities**. The area where the FOPs feel that they make the least contribution is on decisions relating to the **allocation of financial resources** to different projects or priorities. Not all FOPs want a say in more strategic issues of this kind. However, others feel that there should at least be an opportunity for FOPs to make an input if they feel that they have an important contribution to make.

The framework provided by the Cooperation Agreement and FOP work programme is supported by **network meetings** which are held three times a year in Bilbao, which were seen as very useful from a networking point of view. To further encourage this, it was suggested that more informal FOP meetings during the Bilbao meetings should be organised to promote networking.

However, in terms of providing an opportunity to influence what takes place, many FOPs have in the past tended to regard the Bilbao meetings as no more than a formality, arguing

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that there was not enough real discussion and that the results were not taken into account by the Agency in reaching decisions.

The **FOP meetings** require a considerable preparation given the large amount of documentation distributed in advance. The time required to prepare and participate in the meetings appears to prevent some FOPs from taking part on a regular basis. This is, for example, the case with the French FOP who is not sufficiently resourced to take out a large amount of time from other responsibilities and who also sometimes has difficulties getting approval from the national authorities for 'missions'. It was also argued that many of the issues that are discussed at the FOP meetings could be more efficiently dealt with by e-mail or the telephone. It was suggested that the FOP meetings in Bilbao were not focused enough with too many participants, and that smaller meetings could be organised more regularly, either for particular EU regions, or according to subject matter. The appropriateness of Bilbao as a place to hold the meetings was also brought to question by some, as travel arrangements for most FOPs are rather time consuming (both in terms of traveling time and the time needed to be spent away from the office for what is essentially a one-day meeting).

Another way for FOPs to convey ideas to the Agency is via **Board** members. In many cases, there is a close relationship between Board members and FOPs because they work along side each other in the same host organisations but this is not the case in all countries. At a European level, FOP meetings generally take place the day before the **Bureau** meets and another possibility is to organize formal discussions at the same time with FOPs.

Several FOPs voiced concerns that there is not **enough face-to-face contact with Agency staff** and that it has become more difficult to find out who is responsible for particular matters. At present, direct contact is limited almost entirely to the three FOP meetings in Bilbao and the scope for detailed discussions with particular members of the Agency's staff are obviously very limited. Most FOPs would like more opportunities for bilateral contacts with the Agency. It was suggested in this context that more visits by Agency staff to FOPs, and a specified contact person in the Agency for each FOP, would be helpful.

4.1.2 Role of the Agency's Extranet and Website

The Agency's extranet is an important tool for coordinating FOP work plans. In terms of on-going communication, the **Extranet** is generally perceived to be an effective communications mechanism, but the main difficulty from the point of view of the FOPs is that it is not kept up to date. Thus, FOPs frequently receive reminders of work being late that has not yet even been set. The comments of one FOP summarised the feeling reflected in a number of responses:

> "The tasks and deadlines often change throughout the year and it happens quite often that the Extranet Work Plan is not accordingly updated. This can cause a lot of confusion and it is usually the FOP who has to remind the project manager that he/she has to insert the changes

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also into the Extranet Work Plan … The only way to improve the Extranet Work Plan is to introduce regular (once a week) updating of the system by the Agency's project managers."

Some FOPs also commented in interviews that they would appreciate more coordination between project managers at the Agency on the allocation of tasks to FOPs. Ensuring that the work plan is up to date should also help to ensure this coordination.

The Agency maintains a **website** (www.osha.europa.eu) which, together with the network of national websites (including links to the websites of Member States and international collaborators[6]), provides access to global information on legislation and regulations, good safety and health practices, research, statistics, amongst others. Separate sections are available on the main EU-OSHA website for, amongst other things, Campaigns, Risk Observatories and Good Practice. The Agency's website has also become an increasingly important tool for communication with target groups, dissemination of materials and networking. As the survey feedback in Section 3 demonstrates, the electronic information provided by the Agency is widely seen as being useful and the website a successful method of communication. Nevertheless, areas of possible further development have been identified.

Feedback from the research suggests that more could be done to make the Agency's website user-friendly, particularly by making it easier for visitors to identify relevant information and to navigate the website generally. The fact that much of information available from the Agency's website is only available in English is widely regarded as unacceptable and a constraint on it being used, especially by end users. On the other hand, some of those we have spoken to argued that some of the research publications available on the website do not need to be translated to the extent that is currently the case, and that the emphasis should instead be placed on providing access to practical information in more EU languages. According to a small survey undertaken by the Belgian FOP, most companies do not use the Agency's website, partly because too much of the material is in English and partly because it is not practical enough, but instead find information from other sources.

The translation issues has been addressed elsewhere in this report but one consequence of more material being translated from English into national languages is that it would most probably lead to a heavier FOP workload with regard to the checking of translations, and this is something many FOPs could be reluctant to do.

The process of improving the Agency's website is ongoing. According to the rolling work programme 2005-2008:

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[6] These include Australia, Canada, Japan the US, the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), the ILO and the WHO.

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> 'Information will be upgraded on a systematic basis and a new more user-friendly model for its presentation on the Agency's website developed and implemented … The established network structure based on ten common categories will be complemented by the development of single 'entry points' to key topics, enhanced navigation tools and search functions based on the Agency's multilingual OSH thesaurus. The Agency will continue to improve the usability of the sites and accessibility of our on-line information to meet more fully the needs of its different user groups, including practitioners at workplace level."[7]

Similarly, the Agency's Work Programme for 2007 emphasizes the development of the website. Key areas identified include exploiting the **3G technological platform** to develop the website into a "multilingual gateway to information about the Agency, its network, and its services open to all European citizens" and to "ensure that all parts of the Agency network meet agreed **quality standards** and that Agency information is actively promoted across the whole network".[8]

The need for improvements is confirmed by our research, but progress to achieving them has not been as fast as some of those interviewed would have liked. Nevertheless, it is clear that many of the main concerns have been identified and goals have been set for rectifying these.

4.1.3   Role of the Agency in Promoting Networking Between FOPs

FOPs were also asked to give their views on whether the Agency does enough to support networking between FOPs. The following table summarises the results.

Table 3.11: Does the Agency provides enough support to networking between FOPs?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	15	60.0
No	8	32.0
Don't know	2	8.0
No response	0	0.0
Total	**25**	100.0

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[7] *Promoting Quality at Work in an Enlarged European Union: Information for Safe, Healthy and productive Jobs. Rolling Work Programme for 2005-2008.* European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, December 2004.
[8] *Promoting Quality at Work in an Enlarged European Union: Information for Safe, Healthy and productive Jobs. Work Programme for 2007.* European Agency for Safety and Health at Work 2006.

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As the table above demonstrates, a majority of FOPs (60%) think that the Agency provides enough support to promote networking between FOPs. But, as mentioned earlier, other FOPs consider that the Agency could promote further bilateral meetings between FOPs as a means of furthering networking.

Overall, there is a feeling that the Agency could be more active in providing support and encouragement for FOPs to network with each other. More emphasis on exchanging experience and information between FOPs about the various national OSH contexts would be particularly appreciated. To encourage networking, one FOP suggests that an electronic 'notice board' should be set up where questions and answers could be posted (a similar system apparently works well for the network of Euro Info Centres). The possibility of having FOP networking meetings in Bilbao, without the presence of the Agency, was also seen as a good idea.

4.3 Role of the FOP Subsidy

As noted earlier, the FOPs receive an annual financial allocation from the Agency's resources to support specific activities, in particular the European Week campaigns and website development. This support is co-financed by national authorities who also provide additional resources – financial and in kind - to support the FOP function

The role of the **FOP subsidy** has been examined in successive EW evaluations. The findings from this research are reinforced by the responses of to a key question on the importance of the FOP subsidy in the survey undertaken as part of this evaluation.

Table 3.12: How important is the Focal Point subsidy to your activities?

Importance of the subsidy	Number	%
Without the subsidy it would not be possible to carry out key activities	2	8.0
The subsidy is important but some activities could go ahead anyway	15	60.0
Without the subsidy none of the planned activities could go ahead	6	24.0
No response	2	8.0
Total	25	8.0

Source: FOP survey

The responses confirm that the FOP subsidy demonstrates only '**partial additionality**', i.e. in most cases (60%) some activities would go ahead if the subsidy did not exist. However, it is important to note that in the remaining cases (six FOPs), there is a high level of dependence on the financial support provided by the Agency. Five of the FOPs concerned are from EU10 countries and one from an 'old' Member State.

Many FOPs commented in interviews that the subsidy acts as **leverage** on national resources. It is possible to build on the amount of money received from the subsidy through,

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for example, support from the network partners but without the subsidy it would be difficult to cover some of the basic costs involved. Thus, the subsidy acts as 'seed money' and, as such, can be seen to be effective in enabling a variety of activities to take place. The research suggests that this is also the case in some EU15 countries with strong OSH structures. For example, one FOP estimated from an EU15 Country suggested that the subsidy is able to create leverage in the region of 400%-500%.

Turning to the **FOP subsidy procedures**, there are a number of complaints from FOPs. In particular, many FOPs complained about the late payment of the subsidy, as well as about the cumbersome application and reporting arrangements. As one FOP commented in their survey response:

> 'In this matter, the co-operation with the Agency is getting more difficult each year … currently it is a "normal case", that FOP has to transmit more and more documents/replies to the Agency for applying for subsidies and after that to wait several months for receiving the first/final payments (at the moment we have not even received the final payment 2005(!) nor the first payment for 2006). With such behavior in financial issues it is very difficult to develop/implement effective activities."

However, we understand that in many cases, late payment of the FOP subsidy is because not all the required information is provided to the Agency. Overall, the interview programme indicates that opinions are very divided amongst FOPs with regard to the importance of the FOP subsidy.

Figure 4.1: Role of the FOP Subsidy

AU: The small amount of money available makes it hardly worth applying for given the administrative complications in preparing an application and then preparing a report. However, although the grants are modest, they do help leverage support from national sources.
BE: Without the subsidy, few activities would take place, apart from the opening and final events of the European Week campaigns, and it would not be possible to put together a specific website dedicated to the European Week.
CY: The Agency subsidy of €30,000 is relatively small compared with the €160,000 that is received from the annual Government budget for promotion of safety and health. It is argued that the bureaucracy, effort and time required to justify the relatively small subsidy makes its value debatable.
CZ: The subsidy is important to the work of the FOP but criticized for being time-consuming and complicated to administer.
DE: principles underpinning the current system and way of allocating resources are felt to be correct. Without the subsidy, fewer EW-related activities would take place in Germany.
DK: did not apply for the FOP subsidy in 2006, one reason being the overly complicated and time-consuming process involved in applying for the subsidy and in the detailed reporting requirements.
EST: the FOP subsidy is considered to be highly important. It is mostly used for the preparation of publications and keeping the website up to date. Due to the modest level of national funding, the additional resources are much needed.

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FI: The subsidy is an important addition, but not crucial to the work of the FOP, the work of which is also supported by host organisation. The process of applying for the subsidy, and the subsequent reporting, are seen as too cumbersome considering the subsidy's modest size.

FR: The FOP could not function without the OSHA subsidy as the Ministry is unlikely to be prepared to provide an additional amount equivalent to the size of the subsidy.

GR: The subsidy is crucial to the FOP in Greece and few tasks would be possible without it.

HU: the FOP subsidy accounts for approximately 30-40 % of non-core costs, with core costs covered by the national authorities. Although modest, it helps to ensure the sustainability of the promotion of OSH initiatives and helps to leverage support from the national sources.

IT: There is considerable support from the national authorities for the FOP and the subsidy is therefore not critical to carrying out Agency-related tasks.

IRL: In comparison with other European activities, the reporting format is considered to be relatively straightforward compared to many other EU schemes.

LU: The subsidy is considered to be a precondition for the activities organised by the FOP, and the subsidy demonstrates a high degree of leverage in obtaining further funding. It is estimated that the subsidy increases the scale of national activities by between 400% and 600%.

LT: The FOP subsidy (€40,000) accounts for 80% of total budget of EW activities and FOP website management in Lithuania and, as such, is considered to be very important. The national funding that is provided to help cover the FOP's core costs (office costs, personnel, etc) comes from the budget of the Labour Inspectorate.

LV: The subsidy of €30,000 is used to cover 20% of salary costs and is spent mainly on EW activities. Activities to promote the Agency in Latvia in general are required, but no funding is available for this, particularly as there is no budget line at the Inspectorate for Agency activities.

MA: The subsidy covers 80% of the main costs, the remainder being met by the national authorities. The authorities do not contribute to other costs associated with the Agency's work programme. As such, the FOP subsidy is regarded as essential. To help raise additional resources, there is currently an application for support from the 2004-06 Structural Fund programme (specifically ESF) for four projects. It was thought to be helpful if some of the subsidy could be made available to social partners to help them undertake tasks and/or to SMEs for actions related to the EW campaigns.

NL: The FOP subsidy is essential to activities. Not only does the fact of receiving financial support affect the quality of activities, the subsidy also acts as an important motivational/leverage factor.

PL: the subsidy of €50,000 is used for organising EW activities and for maintaining the website. The subsidy is seen as important in increasing the number of activities that can be organised. It should be noted that the Ministry's support is applied for through a competitive procedure each year, rather than being continuously guaranteed.

PT: Although the FOP subsidy is modest, it is regarded as essential. Apart from helping to cover some costs for venues for European Week campaigns, it is seen as having an important catalytic effect in helping to leverage support (financial and in kind) from other sources, such as national authorities.

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SL: the FOP subsidy is seen as helping to leverage additional resources. In particular, it strengthens the FOP's hand in negotiations within the Ministry over financial allocations.

SK: The subsidy is crucial for the FOP to undertake activities relating to the Agency. It is hoped that the level of co-financing could be raised to exceed 50%, as this would enable the FOP to further build up its activities – the FOP function is seen as something of an "add on" to the Inspectorate's work, which means that the support available is limited in nature.

ES: The subsidy is seen as necessary and, if anything, the FOP would like to see a higher level of support. However, the process of applying for the subsidy and the reporting requirements are considered too complicated.

UK: The financial benefits of the FOP subsidy are not considered to be of great value when offset against the rather cumbersome application and reporting procedures, as well as a perception that receiving the subsidy can tie down the operations of the FOP to follow a very European template.

Given that the current FOP subsidy model demonstrates only limited financial additionality and is costly and time-consuming for the Agency and FOPs to administer, the question is: should the FOP subsidy be changed or phased out altogether? Three basic options were suggested in the most recent evaluation of European Week 2005:

- **Status quo** – i.e. retaining the current FOP subsidy but perhaps making adjustments to improve procedures;

- **Reforming the FOP subsidy** - either a purely needs-based system of FOP subsidy allocations or a system based on competitive tendering procedures;

- **Phasing out the FOP subsidy altogether** and thereby freeing up resources for other campaigning activities and projects.

The argument in favour of the status quo is that despite the limited overall financial additionality of the current subsidy scheme, it has operated for a while in its current form and FOPs have become used to it. Moreover, the overall analysis of financial additionality masks cases where it is genuinely required. Finally, it seems that in many cases the relatively modest subsidy is able to create significant impacts in terms of providing a 'seed money' for campaigns and website management. These are all arguments for retaining the basic model.

However, a strong case for change lies in the fact that the allocation of FOP subsidies is not currently based on 'need' except insofar as there is an underlying assumption that larger countries need a larger subsidy. It could therefore be argued that with limited resources, the Agency should discontinue a system that allocates resources on the basis of population size and concentrate on providing support to those FOPs with the greatest **need from a capacity building perspective** (in particular, those in EU10 countries but also some EU15). This presupposes of course that criteria can be developed that enable 'need' to be objectively assessed, and runs into the danger of being perceived as unfair (e.g. rewarding the FOPs in those countries where national support is relatively weak, thus providing a possible disincentive for national authorities to provide further support).

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Another alternative would be to introduce a FOP subsidy model that is awarded to the **'best' projects**. A precedent for a more competitive FOP subsidy scheme is provided by the scheme that operated in 2000. In that year, the allocation of grants was based on a Call for Proposals which any kind of organisation could respond to. There is a feeling that this particular scheme took up too much Agency staff time because of the number of applications that needed to be appraised and the need to still ensure a broad geographical spread of allocations. These and other considerations – in particular the one-year duration of grant agreements which did not allow enough time for contracts to be fulfilled once the application/appraisal procedures had been completed – meant that it was difficult to administer and therefore not continued. Further, most FOPs do not seem to favour this approach, some arguing they would simply not apply for the scheme, while others argued that encouraging competition between FOPs could undermine collaboration and information sharing.

Finally, there is the option of **discontinuing the FOP subsidy altogether**. The amounts awarded to individual FOPs are relatively modest and in many respects the nature scale of EW campaigns in different countries bears little or no relation to the grants awarded. Discontinuing the FOP subsidy would free up human and financial resources that could then be deployed on other arguably more useful ways of supporting the EW campaign effort. In particular, there is a strong argument for the Agency itself to lead more initiatives at an EU-level. The recently launched Healthy Workplace Initiative (HWI) provides one possible a model for this approach.

In the EW context, examples how resources freed up by ending the current FOP subsidy scheme could be redeployed include: helping to organise major EW events in selected countries and giving them a strong European character by inviting speakers and participants from different countries; more EU-wide media campaigns and/or more product development such as the NAPO DVD which was designed in a way that made it easy to customise to different national context and which has proved very popular; and initiatives to promote the engagement of network partners in EW campaigns (e.g. getting them together as part of a conference to plan activities).

At the time when this evaluation was being undertaken, it had in effect been decided to pursue a combination of options as a transitional measure. Thus, the 'European Week Assistance Package' which will be made available to FOPs in 2007 offers them support along the lines of the HWI model but, at the same time, FOPs are free to opt for the current FOP subsidy. This seems a sensible approach: whilst there broad agreement on the need to change the current subsidy system, there is uncertainty over what should replace it (this is, for example, reflected in the Board survey where 39% of those responding indicated that the current system should be reformed but a similar proportion – 42% - were unsure).

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4.4 FOP Role in Key Agency Programmes

The two principal campaigning activities supported by the Agency are European Week (EW) and the Healthy Workplace Initiative (HWI). The first has been undertaken on an annual basis for a number of years and covers all EU Member States; the second was operated for the first time in 2006 for EU10 Member States.

Although differing in geographical scope, the EW campaigns and HWI exemplify two alternative approaches to delivering the Agency's mission as a campaigning organization and information provider: while the main EW campaign activities take place at a national level with the Agency providing support to FOPs, with the HWI, the Agency assumes primary responsibility (through a contractor) for the delivery of activities 'on the ground although the FOPs are of course closely involved. The two approaches are not of course incompatible and it is in many respects a question of emphasis.

4.4.1 European Week Campaigns

As noted earlier, European Weeks are the Agency's principal campaigning activity and one of the four key FOP tasks set out in the 2004 Strategy relates to this.

The Agency provides **materials for the campaign**, such as Fact Sheets, the NAPO DVD, posters etc. Certain activities, such as the video competition organised in 2006 and the **Online Charter** are also arranged at a European level. Others, such as the **Good Practice Award** have both a national and an overarching European component. However, in the main network partners are invited to take part and organise their own activities, and are responsible, together with their network partners, for the dissemination of the materials produced by the Agency. The activities organised by the FOPs include **special audits** and **risk assessment activities in the workplace, training initiatives, disseminating information and promotional material, holding conferences** and **seminars on safety and health at work subjects.**

Key EW target groups are the workplace, safety and health institutions and organisations, trade unions, companies, managers, employees and safety representatives. With the activities being organised through the network of FOPs and their partners, the EW activities can arguably be targeted at the particular needs of the **target groups** in each country in a way that is most appropriate. The FOPs can also garner the support of the network partners in disseminating the information. In addition, momentum for the development of the national networks, and indeed OSH practices in general, is provided through being involved in the campaign.

Against this, with each country producing the EW activities separately, economies of scale can be lost and European added value is harder to achieve. For example, particularly with regard to media campaigns, greater effectiveness could arguably be achieved through campaigns operating from a more European level.

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4.4.2   Healthy Workplace Initiative

The Healthy Workplace Initiative (HWI) exemplifies a more centralized approach. The HWI was launched during 2006 and adopted the slogan 'Safety and health at work is everyone's concern. It's good for you. It's good for business.' The aims were to[9]:

- Developing a preventive culture in the newest Member States, Romania and Bulgaria;

- Promoting knowledge transfer to meet the specific needs of SMEs;

- Raising awareness of health and safety essentials.

A number of **communication activities** were planned in the framework of HWI including campaign materials in 13 languages, 36 events in 2006 to launch the campaign initially in the ten New Member States, a seven-day online promotion campaign in the ten new EU Member States, a print advertising campaign in these countries and an accompanying press campaign. Media Consulta, a PR Agency, was contracted to undertake much of the work involved, both in terms of producing the materials and organising events, with FOP support, at a national level. Media Consulta was responsible for the practical **organisation of conferences and events**; the provision or hire of exhibition stands and material, as well as additional equipment; and the invitation process, including direct mail, promotion activities and follow-up.

The Agency undertook an assessment of the HWI. Feedback from those who participated in the HWI was generally positive: 95% found the seminars interesting and insightful; 89% said they were introduced to new ideas and learned during the seminars; 97% said they were very satisfied or satisfied by the seminars; and 97% said they would recommend that others also attended an HWI seminar. Most of the nearly 3,000 people attending the HWI seminars (82%) were from SMEs. Overall the feedback from FOPs was also positive. It was also argued that having the Agency, rather than the FOPs, responsible for financial procedures, invoicing, contracting, etc, was very helpful. More generally, organising activities in a centralised manner is arguably more cost-effective since there is scope to maximise economies of scale.

Perhaps not surprisingly, however, there was also some less positive feedback. In **Slovakia** and **Latvia**, for example, it was suggested that as the PR Agency was not sufficiently familiar with the specific OSH issues and actors involved. In one or two countries the FOPs argued that the Agency's contractor had selected the wrong newspapers for advertisements. Some

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[9] *The Healthy Workplace Initiative: Interim report 10 July 2006.* Prepared for the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work by MEDIA CONSULTA International holding.

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difficulties, one FOP suggested to us, stemmed from the fact that the HWI contractor was responsible to the Agency, rather than FOPs, which made the relationship between FOPs and the contractor unclear.

4.5   Summary – Role of the Agency

Overall, there is positive feedback on the role of the Agency in supporting FOP activities. However, this section has also identified ways in which this support could be improved:

- At an operational level, the working relationship between the staff from the Bilbao office and FOPs is very positive. However, more generally there is a widespread feeling that the relationship between the Agency and FOPs is not as strong as it used to be.

- The FOP meetings in Bilbao are an important part of the consultation process but more could be done to maximize the benefits. Similarly, more face-to-face contact with Agency staff, including visits to FOP locations, would be beneficial.

- At a more strategic level, feedback from the evaluation suggests that whilst there is adequate scope for FOPs to make an input to preparing events and campaigns, this is less so with more strategic issues – e.g. identifying target group needs and in ensuring that Agency priorities take into account national priorities.

- There is a perception that the Agency's strategic planning procedures are not flexible enough to allow changes to work plans to be easily made.

- The FOP subsidy only demonstrates 'partial additionality' and many European Week activities would still take place if it was not available. However, in some countries, the subsidy is essential to support the FOP function.

Impact Assessment

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Overview

We now turn to a key question from the terms of reference – the overall impact of Agency activities and the contribution of the Agency, FOPs and their networks to this. More specific issues from the terms of reference are summarized below:

- *Are the target groups satisfied with the Agency's products? Are the products considered valid and relevant?*

- *To what extent do the results and impacts of the Agency's activities correspond to the needs of its beneficiaries?*

- *To what extent have the activities of the Agency resulted in any unintended/unplanned results and impacts (both desirable and undesirable)?*

- *What has been the contribution of the individual focal points and their networks to the Agency's outputs?*

5.1   Definition of Target Groups

The definition of the target groups, and the existence of mechanisms that FOPs can use to help assess their needs, is clearly a critical factor determining the Agency's strategic planning and ensuring that products and services are appropriate, and have the desired impact.

The **overall target group** for the Agency's activities and products is defined in its Communication Strategy as being policy makers responsible for the development of OSH-related legislation; OSH policy 'shapers' (including trade unions and employers' representatives); the OSH professional community; information providers and intermediaries; and end user including employers and people within companies with a direct influence on workers' OSH. This is a very broad definition and our research suggests that there is sometimes uncertainly over whether products and services should be designed specifically for end users (workplaces) or for intermediaries (social partners, OSH specialists, etc). This is something that was asked about separately in the questionnaire directed at FOPs.

Table 5.1: Overall, do you think that target groups are clearly enough defined?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	16	64.0
No	6	24.0
Don't know	3	12.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

Source: FOP survey

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As the analysis above shows, two-thirds of FOPs consider that the Agency's target groups are clearly enough defined. However, there were a number of criticisms, an example being:

> "Already in the agency evaluation from 2001 was noticed in the conclusions that target groups and the way to communicate to the target groups should be improved. FOPs have informed permanently that activities, tasks, outputs of the agency should be better directed to the several target groups. The current situation is not yet satisfactory."

From the interviews and survey feedback, it seems that the activities of and materials produced by the Agency are not thought to address the **needs of some target groups** sufficiently precisely. This applies both to target groups defined in a socio-economic sense (e.g. particular sectors or social groups such as young people) and in a geographical sense where some FOPs and network partners criticised the material produced by the Agency as not being tailored precisely enough to end user needs in certain countries.

There is also a widespread view that some of the material produced by the Agency is not suitable for **end users**. In particular, there is a need for more practical guidance on OSH that can be used at a workplace level. The availability of more Agency material in national languages, and easier navigation of the EU-OSHA website to find it, is also seen as important in this respect.

5.2   Appropriateness of the Agency's Products and Services

This section assesses the views of FOPs, network partners and end users on the different Agency activities and the effectiveness of these in reaching target groups.

As noted earlier, the Agency and the FOPs undertake a variety of activities including publications and research, good practice guides and tools, promotional campaigns (in particular European Week), dissemination of information through the internet and organising conferences, seminars and workshops, etc. The Agency and the FOP network also promote networking, and undertake some lobbying activities.

FOPs, network partners and end users were all asked whether the Agency has developed an appropriate range of activities. The combined results are shown in the table below.

Table 5.2: Overall, do you think that the Agency has developed an appropriate range of activities?

Responses	FOPs %	Network Partners %	End Users %
Yes	84.0	69.9	61.6
No	16.0	10.8	10.0
Don't know	0.0	19.3	28.4

Source: Survey feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users

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Although all groups broadly agree that an appropriate range of activities has been developed, FOP views on this question are considerably more favourable than those of network partners and end users. The relatively high proportion of 'don't knows' in latter two cases is not surprising because many network partners and end users are only involved in some Agency-supported activities. Board members who were surveyed generally shared the FOPs' view with 78% arguing that the Agency had developed an appropriate range of products and services.

Notwithstanding the view of all groups that, overall, an appropriate range of activities has been developed by the Agency to promote OSH policies, FOPs and network partners argued in favour of more focus and prioritisation of the activities.

Figure 5.1: Examples – Where Agency is seen not having developed an appropriate range of activities
'There is not enough transparency in the generation of topics of the Agency's work programme. The choice of themes should be limited (with focus on important political topics like demographic change and CSR) instead of addressing a lot of topics in a necessarily lower quality.' (NWP)
'The range of activities is okay but the agency should think over the kinds of activities to be more effective and to have a better balance between the different activities. The impact of activities is quite different. - this should be taken into consideration and focus should be put on the ones with a higher impact.' (NWP)
'More focus would improve the quality.' (FOP)
'Less quantity and more quality of the Agency products would be preferable. The activities should focus more on different target groups.' (FOP)

5.3   Effectiveness in Reaching Target Groups

Related to the question of whether an appropriate range of activities has been developed by the Agency is the question of how effective the different activities are in reaching their target groups.

The following chart summarises the views of FOPs, network partners and end users on the effectiveness of the different kinds of activities that have been developed.

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Figure 5.2: Effectiveness of Agency or FOP activities in reaching target groups (large impact/ very effective)
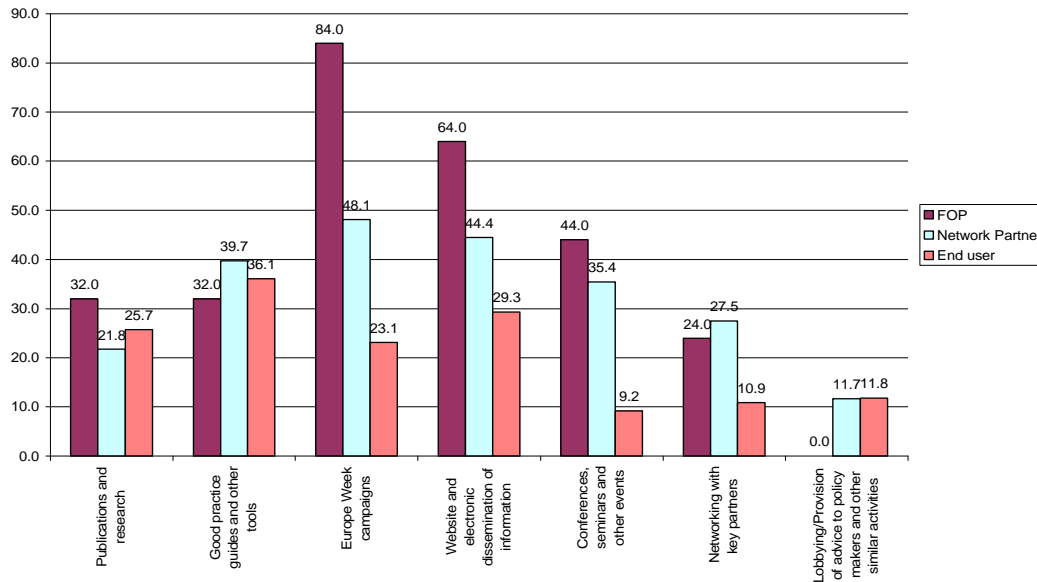
Source: Survey feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users

There is a considerable difference between the views of FOPs on the effectiveness of different Agency activities and the views of end users and network partners:

- FOPs place high value on the effectiveness of **European Week campaigns** with most (84%) considering these to have a large impact while for end users there is a less positive view (23.1%);

- Similarly, 44% of FOPs consider **conferences** to be very effective in reaching target audiences, again roughly four times more in percentage terms than end users (9.2%). It should be noted, however, that many end users may not have been targeted by or come into contact with European Week activities;

- **Good practice guides and other tools** are seen by FOPs as being less effectiveness (32%) than by network partners (39.7%) or end users (36.1%);

- With regard to the **website and dissemination of electronic information**, this is considered to be useful by all categories of respondents with 64% of FOPs seeing this as a very effective activity. **Publications and research** are not seen as being as effective by FOPs (only 32% considering these to be 'very effective'), but end users and network partners do rate these comparatively highly, with 21.8% and 25.7% of respondents respectively being of the view that these are' very effective'.

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It is also helpful to consider whether there are differences of opinion concerning the effectiveness of different Agency-supported activities between **EU10 and EU15 countries**. In the figure below, the views of network partners from EU10 and EU15 countries are compared.

Figure 5.3: Which activities have been most effective in reaching target groups and raising awareness/promoting good practice with regard to safety and heath at work?
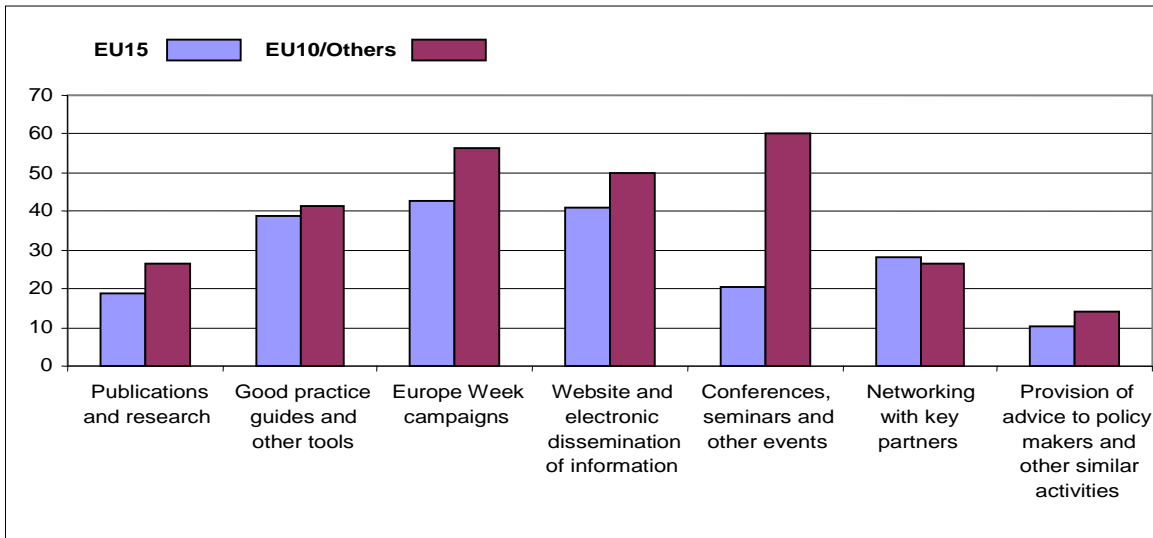
Source: Survey feedback from network partners

As the chart shows, all Agency-supported activities (except networking with key partners) are considered to be more effective by network partners from EU10 countries than those from EU15 countries. The fact that networking with key partners is seen as less useful in the EU10 should perhaps be seen as a reflection of the weaker OSH institutional structures generally in these countries, as noted earlier. Conferences and seminars are considered to be particularly effective by network partners in the EU10 while their effectiveness is particularly poorly rated by partners in the EU15.

Agency Materials and Publications

There seems to be agreement amongst FOPs that Agency research and materials is generally of a high standard from an OSH perspective, if not always suitable for particular end users (see earlier analysis).

The Agency (through the Topic Centres) is responsible for producing most of the materials used by FOPs. As a result, there is some degree of trade-off between benefits of scale obtained, and the lack of local relevance and effectiveness of the materials. It is perhaps inevitable that centrally produced products and services will not always be sensitive enough to particular national circumstances and target groups. There is certainly a view amongst

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FOPs that materials produced by the Agency are often rather too 'European' in nature and fail to address issues from a national perspective, thereby reducing their relevance.

As noted earlier, another suggestion for improvement is that **campaign materials and other information** produced by the Agency needs to be more practical in nature. For material to be useful to SMEs, it has to be extremely practical with plenty of examples and in their language. It seems that sometimes materials produced by the Agency are also sometimes designed to fit the needs of all target groups which in effect means that none are specifically addressed. For example, it is argued that some information on OSH issues is not detailed or analytical enough to be of interest to specialists but at the same time is not practical enough for workplaces. There are some questions as to whether the material is sufficiently customised towards the key target groups, which is closely linked to the one of sufficient practical use laid out above.

The task of tailoring information produced by the Agency to particular target groups is not a function, it is argued, that can be entirely undertaken centrally at an EU level and the question is therefore whether FOPs and their network partners should be doing more in this respect. For example, encouraging FOPs to produce an additional information leaflet from a national perspective to be included in the European Week campaign pack might help in tailoring the relevance of the materials to national needs. The production of some material on OSH questions should, it is argued, be the responsibility of the national actors and not the responsibility of the Agency. The development of good practice guides, however, is seen by most FOPs as being an obvious function of the Agency. Some argue that the dissemination and utilisation of good practice at a European level could, however, be improved, although comparison of data between the different countries is difficult due to the varying collection methods.

In the interviews, many have also voiced a need for more materials in the **national languages**. This is particularly the case for the more practical materials, oriented at the end user level. For the more specialist materials, however, the feedback suggests that fewer translations are required than at present. It is suggested that a better balance could be achieved if some publications and more in-depth studies that are not of direct use to companies were not translated and printed and instead made available electronically.

Overall, differences between FOPs exist on the perceived relevance of Agency materials, partly depending on the capacity of national organisations to produce good quality information themselves on OSH issues but also partly depending on the popularity of the European brand generally. Also, there is an appreciation that, particularly since EU enlargement, it is not possible for the Agency to design products and services at a European level that are suitable for all countries and target groups.

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5.4   Impact of Agency Activities on Target Groups

As part of the evaluation, end users were asked to give their opinion on **the relevance of the Agency's and FOPs' activities** to their organisations and the needs of their employees or members. The results are presented in the chart below.

Figure 5.4: How relevant are the activities of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the National Focal Point to your organisation and the needs of its employees or members?
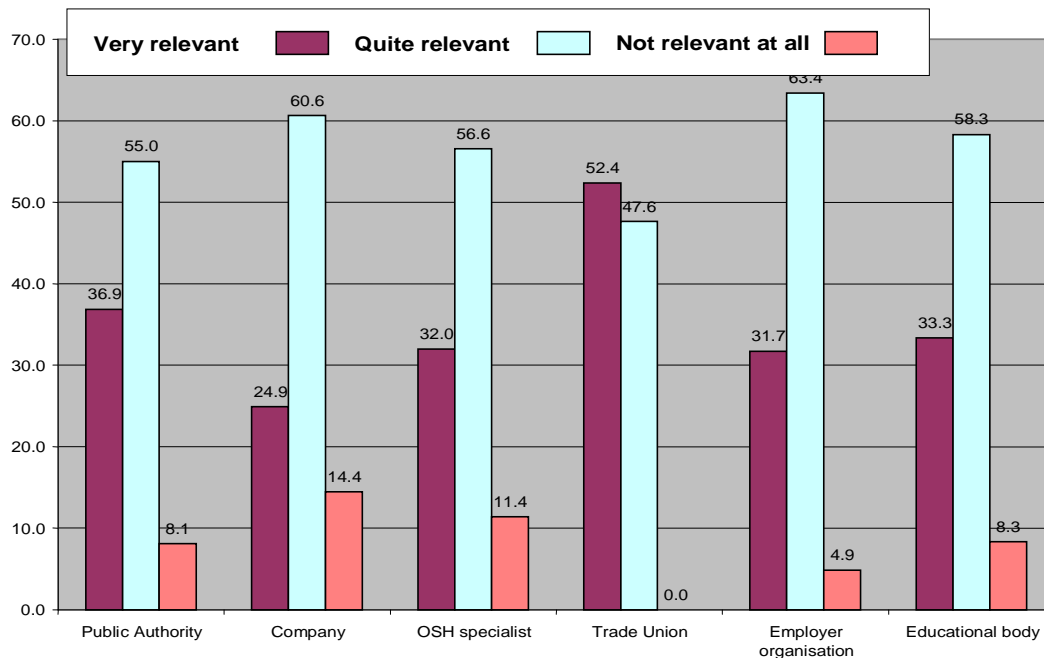
Source: Survey feedback from end users

As can be seen, trade unions consider the Agency's activities as being of greatest relevance to them – over half (52.4%) falling into this category with none stating that they are not relevant at all. **Public authorities, OSH specialists, employer organisations** and **educational bodies** all ranked the relevance of the Agency's activities in a similar way but at a lower level than trade unions. Perhaps not entirely unexpectedly, companies rated the Agency's activities to be of least relevance with only a quarter (24.9%) stating that they were 'very relevant'. It is worth noting that, during the interview programme, the overall Agency's profile and visibility is typically quite low amongst **companies**, with institutional players and intermediaries being much more aware of its activities and materials.

In order to establish whether some Agency activities have different levels of impact in the EU10 and EU15 countries, it is helpful to compare the responses of end users from the different groups of countries.

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Figure 5.5: Which activities supported by the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (or the National Focal Point) has your organisation benefited from (considerable benefit)?
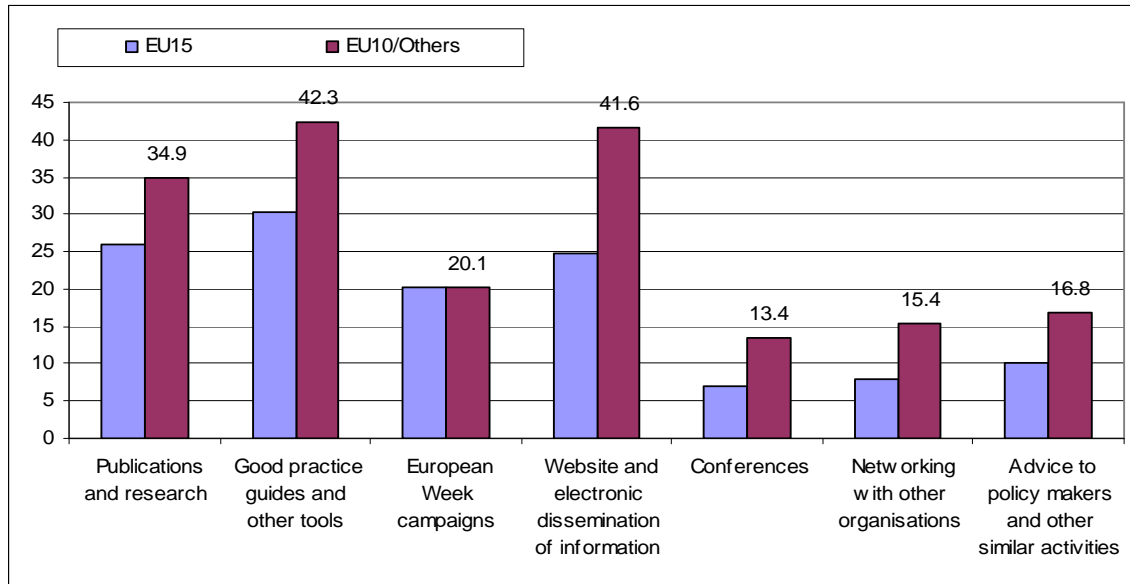
Source: Survey feedback from end users

Perhaps not surprisingly, overall, end users from EU10 countries feel that they have benefited more from Agency activities than their counterparts in EU15 countries. This applies across the full range of Agency activities with the exception of the European Week campaigns where views are similar.

The benefits of the Agency's **website and electronic dissemination of information** seem to be particularly highly rated in the case of the EU10 where 41.6% of end users indicated 'considerable benefits' compared with 24.8% in the EU15 countries. It seems that this is at least partly due to the lack of national sources of OSH information in EU10 countries while interest in the practices of and information from other countries of the EU is generally higher.

FOPs, network partners and end users were also asked for their opinions on which **target groups** the Agency and the FOP network has been the most successful in reaching.

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Figure 5.6: Reach of target groups by activities of the Agency and FOP network ('high level of impact')
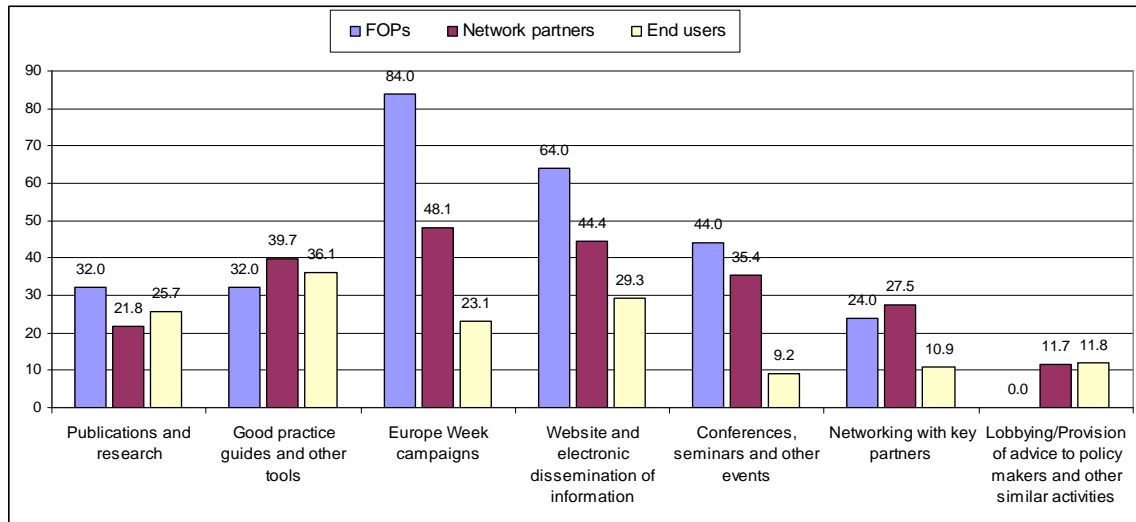
Source: Survey feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users

The above chart shows that, overall, the **FOPs** view the Agency's and the national networks' activities as having the greatest impact on target groups – only in the case of employer organisations do **network partners** view the activities as being more effective (44.6% considering there to be a high level of impact) than FOPs (39.1%). Where all respondents seem to agree are that the Agency has perhaps the highest impact on OSH specialists while the impact is lowest on SMEs.

In all cases, the **end users** survey produced the most pessimistic views on impacts. Although the end users may not be aware of all of the Agency's activities, in many ways their views are the most important on the impact of the Agency's activities. A total of 38.3% of end users were businesses and their view that only 12.7% of large companies benefit from a high level of impact from the Agency's activities should be of concern.

Questions concerning the benefits of different Agency activities were also asked of the end users directly. The following analysis highlights the proportion saying that different activities are of 'considerable benefit'.

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Figure 5.7: Benefit of Agency activities to end users
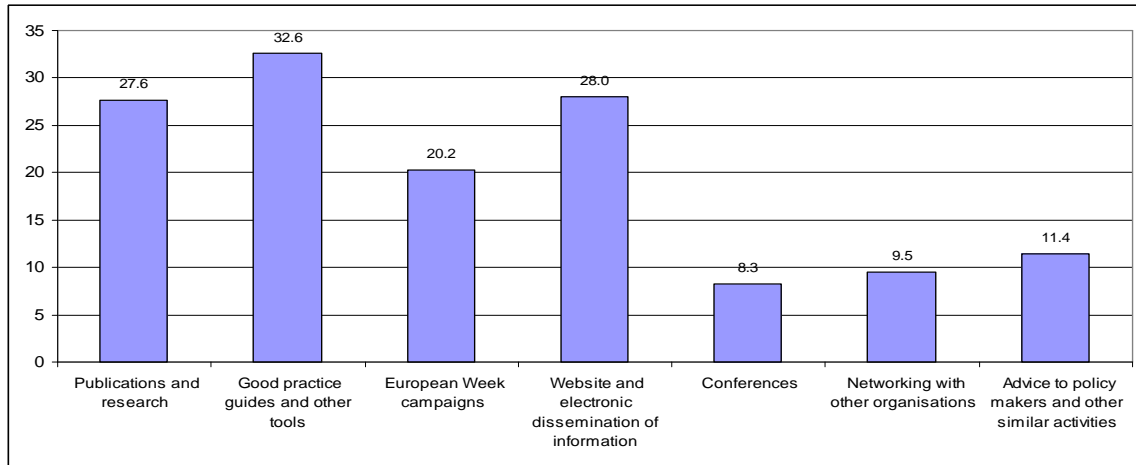
Source: Survey feedback from end users

It is clear that **good practice guides** and other tools provide end users with, overall, the highest benefits. **Publications and research**, as well as **website and electronic dissemination of information** are also considered valuable by most of the respondents. **European Week campaigns** are not considered quite as valuable, and it is notable that 35.3% of the respondents do not consider these campaigns to be of any benefits at all. It is important to note, however, that many end users do not participate in European Week campaigns.

Conferences, networking with other organisations and **advice to policy makers** (and other similar activities) are, however, areas that are seen as having fewer beneficial impacts. With regard to the second of these two categories, this is perhaps not surprising, as these are not activities that would be aimed at, or indeed be visible, to the majority of respondents and this is reflected in the finding that 53% of respondents have not received any benefits at all from conferences.

In order to ascertain the value of a certain type of activities on different EU-OSHA's target groups, the end user survey responses have also been analysed by **type of organisation** (public authority, trade union, business, OSH professional, etc). It is interesting to see that, in most of the initiatives promoted by the Agency, the various activities concerned are seen to be most useful by trade unions, the level of satisfaction being particularly high in the case of European Week campaigns (61.9%) but low for conferences (30%). The following chart analyses these perceived benefits.

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Figure 5.8: Which activities supported by the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (or the National Focal Point) has your organisation benefited from ('Considerable Benefit')?

Considerable benefits
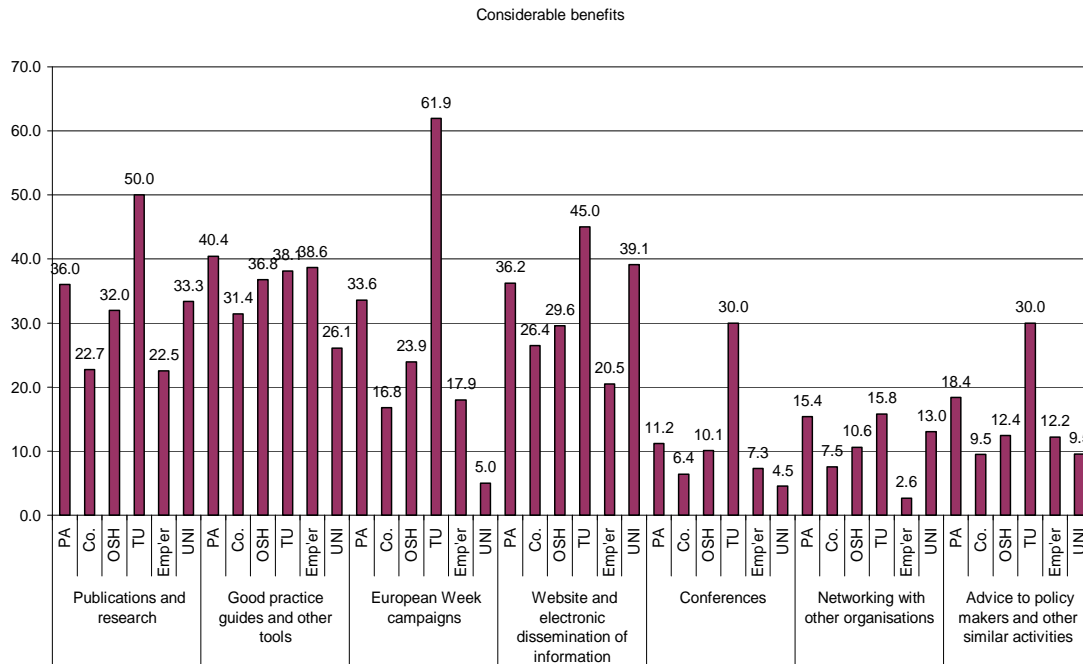
Source: Survey feedback from end users. Key: PA=public authority; CO=company; OSH=safety and health professional; TU=trade union; EMP=employer body; UNI=university or research institute.

For employer organisations, the benefits of the Agency's activities are generally speaking much lower than for trade unions, the one exception being good practice guides and other tools. Here, 38.6% of employer organisations have benefited considerably. For individual companies, although benefits of all activities were considered to be comparatively low, good practice guides and tools (31.4%) and website and electronic dissemination of information (26.4%) scored relatively well. The contrast in perceptions of the benefits of European Week campaigns is particularly striking with only 16.8% of companies indicating a considerable benefit compared with the far more favourable views of trade unions (61.9%) and public authorities (33.6%).

The end users were also asked for their views on the **overall effectiveness of the work of the Agency and FOPs**. As the following chart shows, 69.5% of end users consider that the Agency carries out its activities 'quite' or 'very' effectively, while the equivalent proportion for the FOPs's role is 48.9%. It is notable, however, that a large number of those surveyed in both cases were not able to offer an opinion – with regard to the end users, this percentage was 20.5% and with regard to the FOPs, it was 40.2%. This makes comparisons and firm conclusions difficult. Perhaps more notably, only some 10% of respondents

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thought in each case that the Agency's activities was not being carried out effectively at all, which indicates overall positive views.

Figure 5.9: Overall, how effectively do the Agency and National Focal Point carry out their activities?
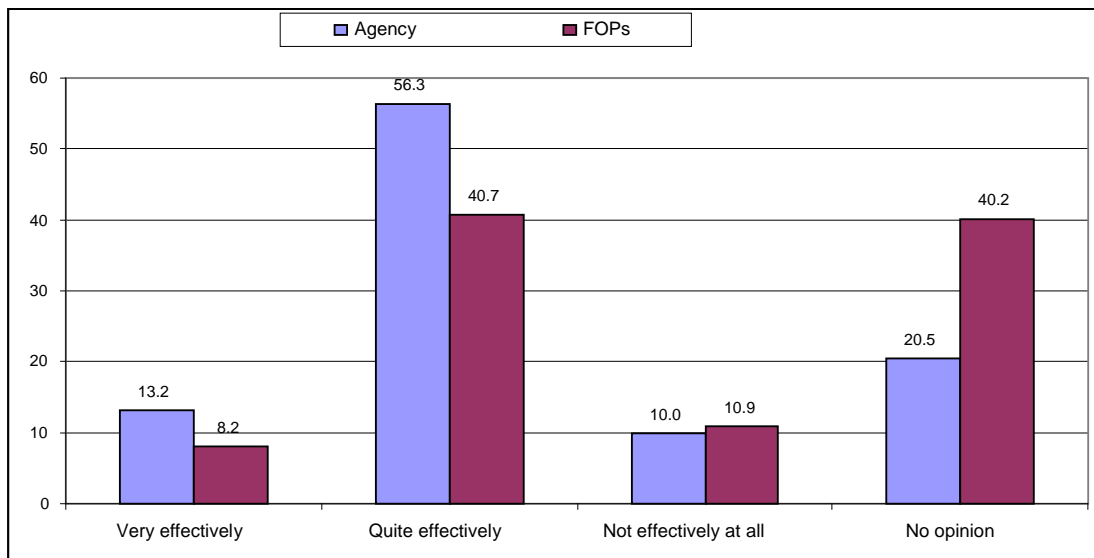
Source: End User Survey

When Board members were asked the same questions, there response was more positive – 86% stated that they thought the Agency is carrying out its tasks 'very' or 'quite' effectively with the corresponding proportion for FOPs being 80%. It could be argued that this is a better indication since Board members are closer to the Agency and FOPs, and better informed about their activities. Conversely, however, it could also be argued that Board members are likely to have biased views. Taken together, however, feedback from the two surveys is clearly positive.

During the interviews with the FOPs, it became apparent that most FOPs do not have in place a specific **system for monitoring the outcome** of their activities. Some time ago, FOPs were required to submit annual reports on activities in their countries to the Agency. However, this practice was discontinued and reporting limited to only those activities supported by the FOP subsidy. Otherwise, the main assessments of the Agency and FOP activities, apart from the earlier external evaluation of the Agency, have been in the context of European Week evaluations although as pointed out earlier, some initiatives such as the HWI have been subject to assessments by the Agency itself.

It was proposed by several FOPs that the Agency should develop a system for measuring and quantifying the impact of activities and develop a set of guidelines to make it possible to

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establish how well the Agency and the FOPs are performing. This would also allow the network to learn from previous experience. A proposed framework for assessing the impact of the European Week campaigns has been suggested in the last EW evaluation. However, a more comprehensive performance measurement system is needed and preferably one which does not depend wholly on external evaluators. End user surveys via *OSHmail* and assessments by Agency staff when they visit FOPs are two possible ways of developing performance measurement practices in this way.

5.5   European Added Value

Many of the questions examined in this section relate to European added value as an underlying theme. This applies most obviously to the **role of the Agency** but also to other aspects such as the value of **trans-national networking between FOPs**, the **branding of Agency products and services** and the nature and extent of impacts achieved on target groups. European added value can be defined as the extent to which the Agency and its network carry out task that would be difficult if not impossible for OSH authorities in EU Member States to achieve on their own.

In general, feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users clearly points to an appreciation that the **European dimension** adds value to purely national and regional initiatives to promote OSH. This view is not, however, clear cut with differences between different categories of survey respondents as the following analysis shows.

Figure 5.10: Importance of the European dimension of activities
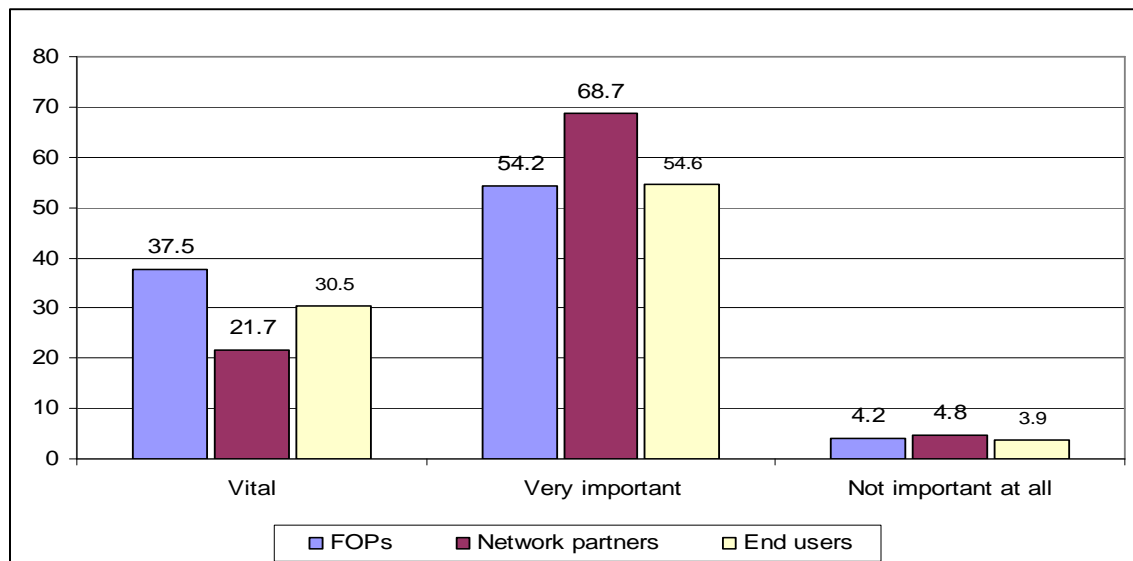
Source: Survey feedback from FOPs, network partners and end users

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A closer analysis of the feedback from different countries indicates that European added value is considered highest in the EU10 countries. However, again, there is no clear cut position and this also applies to some of the EU15 Member State. Overall, it can be said that:

- In many countries, European support for the promotion of OSH is vital given limited **national experience and capabilities** in this field;

- Both in these countries and elsewhere, the **European branding** of OSH initiatives is also important in giving them added credibility, thereby reinforcing purely national schemes and policies;

- At the other extreme, European branding in some countries is perceived as a disadvantage because of less favourable **perceptions generally regarding EU membership**.

Taking the first point, apart from the benefits associated with gaining access to wider European expertise and good practices in the OSH field, the technical and other support provided by the Agency, and through networking between FOPs, is also an important factor. As noted earlier in this report, although the FOP subsidy only demonstrates partial additionality overall, the financial support provided by the Agency is very important in some countries because of the limited resources available from purely national sources to promote OSH policies. There are also economies of scale to be gained from certain activities being undertaken at a European level, for example the preparation of European Week campaign materials, and benefits from the European branding of OSH products and services.

These aspects of European added value are more pronounced in some countries than others, often depending on perceptions generally regarding EU membership but also on how well developed OSH practices and policies are. As OSH matters are likely to remain primarily a national competence, some have argued that the added value of the Agency lies entirely at a European level rather than in national interventions. Also, given the relatively modest resources available to the Agency, the impact that can be achieved directly at a national level across 27 Member States is clearly very limited. This is especially so at the workplace level given the size of the SME target market. A critical factor is therefore achieving leverage and multiplier effects.

Following on from this, some FOPs and network partners see the role of the Agency as lying primarily in encouraging the sharing of knowledge between countries and exchanging information about the OSH situation in the different EU Member States. Added value – and the potential to achieve multiplier effects – also lies it is argued, in helping to develop the network of national actors in countries where these networks are relatively weak, encouraging partners and political forces to address OSH issues, raising the profile of OSH and influencing decision-making at the national and European levels. In this context, it is argued that more emphasis should be placed by the Agency and FOPs on showcasing what

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different countries have achieved in the field of OSH and strengthening the evidence-base for OSH policies. Some interviewees felt that the Agency ought to play a greater role as an EU level knowledge centre in the field of OSH. Efforts could then be concentrated more effectively on policy makers and intermediaries as the key target groups.

5.6   Summary – Impact Assessment

- There is a very broad definition and our research suggests that there is sometimes uncertainly over whether products and services should be designed specifically for end users (workplaces) or for intermediaries (social partners, OSH specialists, etc).

- The activities of and materials produced by the Agency are not thought to address the needs of some target groups sufficiently precisely. This applies both to target groups defined in a socio-economic sense (e.g. particular sectors or social groups such as young people) and in a geographical sense where some FOPs and network partners criticised the material produced by the Agency as not being tailored precisely enough to end user needs in certain countries.

- Although FOPs, network partners and end users broadly agree that the Agency has developed an appropriate range of activities, FOP views on this question are considerably more favourable than those of network partners and end users. This is also the case with views on how effectively different target audiences are being reached.

- Amongst key target groups, trade unions generally give the most positive feedback on the benefits of Agency activities with the level of satisfaction being particularly high in the case of European Week campaigns. Amongst employer organisations, the benefits of the Agency's activities are generally speaking much lower. Overall, around two thirds (69%) of end users consider that the Agency carries out its activities 'quite' or 'very' effectively.

- Overall, feedback from the evaluation suggests that the activities of the Agency and FOP networks demonstrate a high degree of European added value although this varies across countries. The European dimension is important in many countries in enhancing the credibility of activities to promote OSH, capacity building, sharing good practices and more efficient ways of working generally. However, perceptions regarding European added value vary considerably and in some EU Member States, generally those with relatively highly developed OSH practices and systems, the benefits of Agency activities are not seen as favourably.

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Benchmarking

Overview

A benchmarking exercise was carried out involving four other European Agencies. The aim was to put some key aspects of this evaluation into a wider context, as well as to learn about good practices adopted in the other agencies.

It was not feasible, or desirable, to carry out a more formal comparison of the agencies, largely because of different functions and structures. The information used for the benchmarking exercise was collected from publications available on the agencies' websites, combined with interviews with the agencies themselves. The Agencies selected for the benchmarking exercise were the following:

- **The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop).** The Centre was set up in 1975, and provides policy-makers, researchers and practitioners with information to allow them to have a clearer understanding of developments in VET and to take well-informed decisions on future action. Cedefop has 130 employees.

- **European Environment Agency (EEA).** The regulation establishing the EEA was adopted by the European Union in 1990, coming into force in 1993. According to its mission statement, the Agency is "dedicated to providing timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy-making agents and the public, to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvements in Europe's environment." Currently EEA employs 167 staff members, covering temporary agents, contract agents, national experts and a limited number of officials. Approximately 20 consultants are also employed on different projects

- **The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound).** Eurofound was set up in 1975 to contribute to the planning and design of better living and working conditions in Europe. The role of the Foundation is to provide information, advice and expertise for key actors in the field of EU social policy on the basis of comparative information, research and analysis. Eurofound employs 100 persons.

- **The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)** EMCDDA is the central reference point for drug information in the European Union. Set up in 1993, and based in Lisbon, its role is to provide the EU and its Member States with objective, reliable and comparable information on drugs and drug addiction. EMCDDA employs 92 persons.

The selection of the Agencies was based on their comparable structures and similar roles as information providers. In the case of Cedefop and Eurofound, their tripartite structures

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were of particular interest because this is also a feature of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work, while in the case of EEA and EMCDDA, the main reason for their selection lay in the similar focal point networks they coordinate.

6.1   National Focal Points and Network Structures

Each of the Agencies coordinates networks of national focal points but these have differing roles. However:

- All the networks act as an interface for the agencies with the national context, and gather information for the agencies to use;

- Whereas in the case of EU-OSHA, the FOPs also have a significant role in disseminating information and campaigning, this tends to be less so with the other agencies which have more of a data gathering and/or research function;

- There are considerable differences in the way the various Agencies' networks are organized and funded, with regard to the types of organisations that host the national focal points, and in the number, nature and role of network partners.

Like EU-OSHA, both Eurofound and Cedefop are tripartite organisations, and so, in addition to national authorities, both employer representatives and trade unions are represented in their Boards. An overall summary of the differences in the functions and operations of the networks is provided in Table 6.1 at the end of this section.

EEA: the EEA, based in Copenhagen, coordinates the European environment and observation network (Eionet). The network aims to provide timely and quality-assured data, information and expertise for assessing the state of the environment in Europe and the pressures acting upon it. The information is principally aimed at decision makers, but also at other target groups such as the general public. Eionet consists of the EEA itself, a number of European Topic Centres (ETCs) and a network of around 900 experts from 37 countries in over 300 national environment agencies and other bodies dealing with environmental information. Of these, the NFPs, are the closest in function to EU-OSHA's FOPs. These are experts or group of experts in national environmental organisations nominated and funded by the country and authorised to be the main contact point for the EEA. The NFP coordinates a national network consisting of numerous National Reference Centres (NRCs). The coordination of Eionet is managed by four persons (including secretarial support).

Eurofound: the Agency, which is based in Dublin, coordinates two main networks. Firstly, the National European Observatories (NEOs), located in all Member States, as well as Norway, Switzerland and acceding countries, carry out research on national situations, prepare case studies, produce national reports and conduct surveys. NEOs are contracted through a tendering process, and reside in different kinds of institutions – from private research organisations to governmental organisations. The annual budget for the NEOs is

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just under €2 million. Secondly, National Outreach Centres have been set up in 10 countries as communication relays for the foundation.

To foster closer relations with social partners, Eurofound arranges one-day meetings for each group each year. Social partners are also invited to attend seminars and conferences arranged in different countries, as well as to the road shows taking place in the different countries. Contacts are also maintained at the social dialogue committee, as coordinated by DG Employment. Eurofound has one person working fulltime to provide network support functions. Eurofound also has one manager for the NEO, as well as three other persons who spend approximately 25% of their time on this task plus the editor-in-chief who devotes about 5% of her time to the network. For the NOCs, Eurofound has two persons working 10% of their time (a secretary and a project manager). Outside the coordinating team there are also approximately two editors who work on the coordination more or less fulltime.

Cedefop, which is based in Thessaloniki, co-ordinates different networks such as Skillsnet (early identification of needs), ReferNet, VET teachers and Cedra (research). The network with perhaps the most similarities with EU-OSHA's FOP network, however, is ReferNet - the European network of reference and expertise. This is a structured, decentralised, networked system of information collection and dissemination, established by Cedefop to meet the growing demand for information that makes comparisons between Member States, developments and policies, possible. The network carries out three categories of tasks: documentation and dissemination; collecting and analysing information; and research. ReferNet comprises a national consortium in each Member State made up of organisations representing vocational education and training institutions. The representatives have been contracted through an open call for tender, but there has recently been a move towards a grant procedure.

At Cedefop, attempts have been made to gear activities more closely to what the social partners want. However, the difficulty is often that the social partners do not themselves know entirely what it is that they might need. Although it can be difficult to establish a close working relationship with the social partners, contacts are established through, for example, participation in different working groups coordinated by the European Commission.

In terms of coordinating personnel, ReferNet has one person almost full-time to work on network coordination and others who contribute to different aspects, adding up to approximately two people full time overall. In the case of other Cedefop networks, for example the VET teachers and trainers network, there is an outside contractor who helps coordinate it on a part-time basis, with a contribution of approximately one day a week from inside Cedefop. The other networks take up to about a day a week each in terms of coordination (i.e. contacts, arranging meetings, posting information, etc).

EMCDDA: the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drugs Addiction, based in Lisbon, coordinates Reitox, a network of National Focal Points (NFPs). This network collects information on drugs in Europe and comprises drug-specialised focal points in the

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EU Member States, Norway, the candidate countries and at the European Commission. The Reitox NFPs constitute the main information interface between the EMCDDA and Member States and as such play a dual role. On the one hand, under the responsibility of their governments, they are the national source providing drug information to the agency. On the other, under EMCDDA guidance, they are 'ambassadors' representing and promoting Reitox at home, publishing a national report on the drugs situation once a year and helping to disseminate the EMCDDA's annual report. Just as the EMCDDA relies on the NFPs as sources of information and expertise, so they in turn rely on their own national networks of drug monitoring units for data provision and know-how. Eight people are involved in the coordination of the Reitox network from EMCDDA.

6.2   Relationship between the Agencies and the National Focal Points

EEA: the NFPs and NRCs of Eionet are nominated and funded by national authorities, and no extra funding is provided by the Agency. The ETCs are contracted through a competitive process.

Eurofound contracts both of its networks through a competitive tendering process. The annual budget for the NEOs is a total of a little under €2 million, i.e. 10% of the Foundation's €20 million budget (2007). The 10 NOCs, which concentrate on the dissemination of information, operate on the basis of three working days a month, and the total budget for their work in 2007 is € 269,000.

Cedefop: the Refernet representatives of Cedefop have been contracted through an open call for tender. With regard to financing, there has recently been a move towards a grant procedure. The national representatives are paid between €19,000 and €39,000 per annum, depending on the size of the Member State. This subsidy is supposed to cover 70% of the activities of the representatives, but it is estimated that the percentage of total costs covered is more like 42%. A total of between €800,000 and €900,000 is spent each year supporting the network, i.e. approximately 15% of the Agency budget of €6m.

EMCDDA: the National Focal Points of the Reitox network are appointed by national authorities, and reside mainly in health or interior ministries, or in institutes of public health. The NFPs receive a grant of around €97,000 if an additional 50% co-financing is provided by the various Member States. This funding is more or less the same across all countries and, taken together represents approximately 20% of the EMCDDA's annual budget of just over €12m.

In the case of EU-OSHA, the FOPs have available to them a subsidy of between € 20,000 and € 50,000, depending on the size of the country. The subsidy is mainly used to support European Week activities and maintaining the national websites, and is in most cases supported by national funding. Overall, EU-OSHA spends approximately 20-25% of its operational budget on supporting the FOP network, which is a little more than is the case with Cedefop, and significantly more than is the case with Eurofound (although in the case

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of Eurofound, the total amount is of course larger). However, since the tasks undertaken are very different, direct comparisons are difficult to make. This is particularly the case since very different procedures are used for contracting the focal points, as stipulated in their respective Founding Regulations.

6.3   Information Collection and Dissemination

The EU agency networks covered by this exercise mainly concentrate on gathering information and research, as opposed to disseminating it, or campaigning as is the case with EU-OSHA's FOP network. Without generalizing too much, it should also be noted that the Agencies have more of a function in producing scientific outputs, rather than in collecting and disseminating information as is the case for EU-OSHA. This is also reflected in the roles carried out by the different networks. However, most other Agencies do also play some role in information dissemination, although the extent to which this is done tends to vary depending on the country concerned.

EEA: the NFPs also have an information dissemination role in that many NFPs organise launch events and issue press releases to promote key publications. The NFPs also forward information to relevant networks in the Member States. However, most information dissemination is done centrally through the Agency, and there are no particular activities arranged at the national level.

Cedefop: the Refernet network of Cedefop is also assigned a modest information dissemination role, in that they are asked to disseminate European level information to relevant contacts, and at different events. However, the emphasis being on the collection of information.

Eurofound: information dissemination at a national level is mainly carried out by the NOCs, of which there are currently 10, but which are expected to be operating in all Member States by 2008. The main tasks of the NOCs are to: identify target groups (and the members of those groups) and the most effective means for the Foundation to meet their information needs; assess where and when information from the Foundation could have a significant impact on EU social policy issues, within the national context; and to communicate and disseminate relevant information to the target groups and individuals.

NOCs undertake between two and four dissemination activities per month, as well as keeping a web page up to date in the national languages, disseminating a newsletter and attending relevant events. NOCs are contracted through a call for tender, and so NOCs reside in different kinds of organisations: from a PR agency in Estonia, to the Economic and Social Council of Spain. In some cases, such as PREVENT in Belgium, the NOC resides in the same organisation as the NEO. The separation of information collection and dissemination roles is considered to work very effectively, with the NOCs having the right expertise for disseminating materials and information. In terms of campaigning, Eurofound

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reaches the national level through an annual road show, used to publicise research, such as the European Quality of Life Survey.

EMCDDA: with regard to the Reitox network of the EMCDDA, the NFPs submit to the EMCDDA – for EU-level analysis – regular statistics, qualitative data and other information on the main drug trends and developments in their country. Apart from their role in data collection, the National Focal Points also have an important information dissemination function which mainly relates to the national reports which they produce and the EMCDDA's annual report (in addition to the actual launch event, their tasks include language checking of the press release, providing feedback on media coverage, etc).

Of the focal point networks discussed here, the EU-OSHA FOP network has the clearest role in information dissemination and campaigning, which is not the case for the other focal point networks, where most information dissemination tends to be conducted centrally. An interesting model is that used by Eurofound, where the information dissemination function is contracted out to a different organisation (this reflects the open tendering process used to recruit the NEOs and the NOCs).

6.4   Networking between National Focal Points

The main method of networking and communication between the different focal points are the network or focal point meetings, generally organised at the premises of the Agencies concerned.

EEA: in the case of the EEA, the Eionet group (consisting of NFPs, ETC managers, representatives of the European Commission and relevant EEA staff) meets three times a year with around 70–80 participants. The EEA NFPs also have a small working group of approximately 7-8 NFPs, which meets in plenaries three times a year before the general NFP meetings. These meetings are attended by Agency staff, and the results of the working group are presented at the NFP meetings. The EEA NFPs also organise an annual survey which asks NFPs about the situation in different countries. The results of these surveys, which focus on questions such as relationship with national board members, quality of communication with the Agency through the CIRCA website etc, are presented and discussed at the NFP meetings.

Cedefop: the representatives meet twice a year, with one meeting for the senior members of organisation and another for technical representatives. Following a request from the Refernet network, Cedefop supports regional meetings, which encourage further exchanges of information and dialogue. It has been found that information is easier to handle at these meetings, while similar issues faced in certain regions also encourage communication.

EMCDDA: as coordinator of the Reitox network, the EMCDDA organises regular meetings of the heads of NFPs to plan ahead, exchange views and discuss thematic developments. Daily communication between the EMCDDA and the NFPs is facilitated

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through the Reitox extranet, a restricted website for the exchange of information and documentation between the network partners.

The methods used to support networking between focal points are, therefore rather similar, with focal point meetings playing a key role. Of interest is the regional approach adopted by Cedefop, as well as the working group as organised by the EEA, as experiences with these seem to have been positive as a way of strengthening cooperation between different focal points, and between them and the agencies.

6.5   EU Enlargement

The impacts of EU enlargement for the networks have been dealt with in different ways by the agencies although there have also been some common approaches, for example the use of Phare funding to help prepare for accession:

EEA: in the case of the EEA, the process of EU enlargement has not brought about pressure on resources, since no real differentiation took place between EU Member States and other countries previously.

Eurofound: following enlargement, Eurofound undertook some streamlining in the function of its networks. Whereas previously there had been three research networks contributing to the different observatories, these have recently been combined into one network. Funding from PHARE was also used to support the expansion of the network in new EU Member States.

Cedefop: for Cedefop, EU enlargement has proved a challenge and one of the ways used to tackle this has been through a regional approach emphasizing study visits between new and old Member States.

EMCDDA: REITOX training academies for National Focal Points on subjects such as media relations have been organised, the role of which has been particularly important in relation to the process of EU enlargement.

6.6   Quality of Information and Translation Issues

For all Agencies, the focal points are hosted by very different national structures, which contribute to different ways of working and, at times, different levels of quality in terms of the information provided.

EEA: the EEA makes a concerted effort to ensure that information provided by the different focal points is of a sufficiently high quality. If the information is not sufficient, it is simply not used. In addition, the countries are ranked according to the quality of the data and information provided. Although somewhat controversial, the ranking, combined with the occasional decision to not use data provided, provide strong incentives for the countries

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to improve the quality of the data. There are certain types of information which Member States are bound by law to provide the EEA with, which may have an influence on this.

In the case of the EEA, as with EU-OSHA, there is a requirement for all translation to be undertaken by the European Translation Centre in Luxembourg. Some information is available on the Agency website in all EU languages, but it is not possible to translate great quantities of information due to the high costs involved. Indeed, the translation activities of the Agency have generally reduced over the past years. However, summaries of the main data for the reports, as well as press releases, are translated into all EU languages. The Board members are also consulted on whether certain materials need to be translated. When translation is requested by a Board member, NFPs are expected to be involved in quality checking.

Eurofound: in the case of Eurofound, a system for assessing and maintaining the quality of the reports is currently being developed. Eurofound does not maintain different national websites, but instead focuses on one website on which information is mainly found in English. Indeed, not much of the material produced by the Foundation is translated into different languages. With regard to overseeing the quality of the translations, while translation is mainly undertaken at the Translation Centre in Luxembourg, national centres have been contracted (through a call for tender) to check the quality. In some cases, this centre is the same as the NEO. The translation budget for 2007 is approximately € 295,000, of which € 50,000 is used for the process of checking the translation.

Cedefop: very little of Cedefop's output is translated into all EU languages, and most of its materials are available only in English. However, some promotional literature is translated into all languages, and major reports are translated into French and German. Being one of the first generation of European Agencies, Cedefop is not bound to use the Translation Centre in Luxembourg, but instead has its own translation network, as well as a coordination unit based in the Foundation.

EMCDDA: for the Reitox network, quality of information is assured largely by the use of a harmonized set of guidelines, indicators and data-collection tools. The EMCDDA assesses the quality of all data received from the network and discusses results individually with the NFPs. The EMCDDA's Annual Report, the main publication, is translated into 24 languages using the European Commission's Translation Centre. As with the other Agencies, some difficulties have been faced with the varying quality of the translations. The EMCDDA has, however, worked with the Translation Centre to ensure that key terminology is correctly translated into different languages using the NFPs to ensure that this is so (National Focal Points also contribute to checking the translation of press releases).

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6.7   Target Groups

All the EU-supported agencies have defined particular target groups for their activities. In most cases, the main target group is decision-makers at an EU and national level. Others have more wide-ranging target audiences.

EEA: as defined in the EEA's Communications Strategy (2007) the primary target groups of the Agency are policy makers, i.e. politicians and their institutions at a European level, and European citizens. The secondary target groups of the Agency are policy makers at national level and non-governmental policy influencers with strong environmental interests such as businesses, think tanks and non-profit organisations. The EEA's strategy also includes a commitment to strengthen the Agency's communication with younger audiences.

The EEA has increasingly focused on providing information directly to the public through, for example, creating web tools and providing real time information about the situation in different countries. Information is presented in a simple, factual way, and all scientists and experts are expected to be able to present their material in an easily understandable way. In terms of marketing to the general public, the Agency works actively with Google to ensure that it is high up in relevant searches. Different products have been produced so as to reach particular target groups. For example, the Agency intends to develop a regular indicator based country benchmarking product to encourage discussion of national performance in the environmental field. It is hoped that this will help influence policy makers and encourage best practices.

Cedefop: the main 'client' of Cedefop's work is the European Commission, to which it provides information, guidance and technical support. Increasingly, Cedefop is also targeting policymakers at the European and Member State level. Contacts are maintained through participation in various working group. European instruments have been developed to enable Member States to compare their progress. Previously, the focus has been more on publications and dissemination of information but a clearer focus on influencing policy has now been developed. In order to measure its impact on policy, the policy objectives of Cedefop, their appropriateness, and the changes in policy context are subjected to scrutiny. Frequent discussions are also held with relevant policymakers at the European level so as to acquire qualitative information on impacts.

EMCDDA: according to its Founding Regulation, the EMCDDA has a number of target audiences – decision makers, researchers and professionals in the anti-drugs field and the media. Target audiences are defined at two levels – by the Centre at the EU level and by National Focal Points who compile lists of decision-makers and others to be targeted in their respective countries. The EMCDDA's aim is to provide the information required for evidence-based policy-making.

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6.8   Conclusions - Benchmarking

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As the benchmarking analysis makes clear, there are considerable differences – but also common ground - in the way that the various EU-supported Agencies and focal point networks operate.

With regard to **national focal point functions**, the specific campaigning role of the EU-OSHA FOPs is difficult to compare with the practices of other Agencies, but it is rather unique amongst the Agencies considered in this section. With the other Agencies, the focal points tend to have role in publicising key reports, whereas with EU-OSHA much of this is done at a more centralized basis. However, otherwise, the role of focal points is mainly to collect information for analysis at a European level, rather than to disseminate it. In the case of EU-OSHA, these information collection and dissemination functions are more evenly balanced as core functions.

The **cost of supporting national focal point networks** is broadly similar. In EU-OSHA's case this is around 15% of its overall budget which is broadly in line with other agencies (Cedefop – 15%, Eurofound – 10%; EMCDDA – 20%). It is interesting to note the differing ways in which focal points are financed – in some cases, as with EU-OSHA, on a variable basis depending on the size of the member state concerned or, where focal points are appointed by open tender, on the basis of the offers received; in other cases (e.g. EMCDDA), on the basis of a fixed financial allocation for all countries because it is assumed that the tasks to be undertaken do not vary across countries and involve the same workload.

The **target groups** of the Agencies focus on providing decision-makers at an EU and national level with the information required to make policies. After that, there targets differ in a way that tends to reflect their respective functions. are defined in very different ways. With Cedefop, for example, there has been a move to further narrow the definition of the groups. In the case of the EEA, there seems to be an opposite tendency with more emphasis being put on communicating key messages to the general public. EU-OSHA has, by comparison with the other agencies, a very broadly defined target market since its aim is to reach safety and health at work professionals and the social partners, but beyond this also the mass of small businesses in Europe.

The nature of the **relationship between focal points and the respective agencies**, and between the focal points themselves, is similar but the methods used to maintain contact vary. None of the agencies operate their own extranet such as that of EU-OSHA but instead Eurofound and the EEA use the Commission's CIRCA website, where relevant information is posted. A variety of methods to encourage inter-focal point networking (such as a regional approach, study visits, etc). The challenges of translating materials are faced by all the agencies and there are differing procedures to deciding what to translate, in some cases (e.g. EMCDDA) the decision lying with NFPs and board members There are also differing approaches to quality control but only one agency, the EEA, has developing a ranking system.

Practices at Other EU Agencies

Table 6.1 Overview of National Focal Point Networks

	EU-OSHA – FOPs	Cedefop - ReferNet	EEA – NFPs (of Eionet)	Eurofound - NEOs	EMCDDA – Reitox
Basic role of national focal points networks	The FOPs are the Agency's main health and safety information network. Coordinate national tripartite network, organise European Week campaigns and provide Agency with national information.	ReferNet is a structured, decentralised, networked system of information collection and dissemination. The network carries out three categories of tasks: documentation and dissemination; collecting and analysing information; and research.	Experts or group of experts in national environmental organisations authorised to be the main contact point for the EEA. The NFP coordinates the national network consisting of numerous national reference centres (NRCs).	The National European Observatories carry out research on current national situations, prepare case studies, produce national reports and conduct surveys.	The Reitox network collects information on drugs in Europe and comprises drug-specialised focal points in the EU Member States, Norway, the candidate countries and at the European Commission.
Contracting with national focal points and networks	Nationally nominated and funded, together with a subsidy from the Agency of between €20,000 and €50,000, mainly for carrying out European Week campaigns and website management.	Contracted through an open call for tender. Subsidy of €19,000 - €39,000 supposed to cover 70% of costs. Actual proportion thought to be 42%. Between €800,000 and €900,000 spent annually from Foundation's total budget of approximately € 6 m. Possible move towards a grant procedure.	Nationally nominated and funded. Also the case for NRCs.	Contracted through an open call for tender. Annual budget totals a little under €2m. Foundation's budget for 2007 is € 20.2 m. (2007 budget for NOCs is €269,000)	Nationally nominated. All NFPs receive a grant of €97,000 when an additional 50% co-financing is provided by the Member State.
Proportion of budget to support networks	Total value of grants to support network is around 20% of agency budget.	Total value of grants to support network is around 15% of agency budget.	No funding is provided to support the network from the agency's own resources.	Total value of grants to support network is around 10% of agency budget	Total value of grants to support network is around 20% of agency budget.

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Information collection / dissemination	Play a role in both information collection and dissemination. Organise European Week campaigns.	Main role in research and information collection. Asked to disseminate European level information to relevant groups and at events.	Main role in research and information collection. Involvement in publicising key reports nationally – press releases, launch events. Most publicity organised centrally.	Main role in research and information collection. Information dissemination function separated from the research function. Undertaken by NOCs.	Main role in information collection, but have a role in dissemination e.g. with publication of EMCDDA annual report and national reports
Translation	Wide range of materials are translated for campaigning and other purposes. Use of Translation Centre.	Most materials are available only in English. However, some promotional literature is translated into all languages, and major reports are translated into French and German. Does not use Translation Centre.	Summaries of the main data for the reports, as well as press releases, are translated into all EU languages. Uses Translation Centre.	Not much material is translated into different languages. While translation is mainly undertaken by the Translation Centre, national centres have been contracted to check the quality.	EMCDDA annual report translated but with other material decision lies with Board member in each county.
Main target groups	Decision makers at EU and national levels, social partners and safety, and health professionals.	European Commission. Increasingly, Cedefop is also targeting policymakers at the European and Member State level	EU decision makers, European citizens, and (secondary target groups) policy influencers in businesses and non-profit organisations. Public is also being targeted increasingly.	Decision makers at EU and national levels, social partners and other organisations including businesses concerned with employment policy.	Decision-makers at EU and national levels, drugs professionals.
Communication, network support and focal point networking	EU-OSHA uses an extranet for communication with FOPs. Two FOP meetings p.a. One FTE person allocated by EU-OSHA to network coordination.	Regional meetings between ReferNet representatives held. In terms of Focal Point meetings, a separate meeting is arranged for senior members of organisation, and another for technical staff.	Working group of 7-8 NFPs meet prior to NFP meetings to discuss key issues. NFPs carry out self-assessment questionnaires.	One networking meeting is held each year for each group of social partners and NEOs. Eurofound has the equivalent of four FTE persons involved in network coordination and support.	NFPs meet once a year with the EMCDDA in Lisbon. Reitox academies provide training to NFPs which offers additional networking opportunities. EMCDDA has an 8-person coordination unit.

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In this final section of the report, we provide overall conclusions from the evaluation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and a number of recommendations with regard to the future.

7.1   Overall Conclusions

1.   It is clear from the evaluation that the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is very highly regarded as a source of information in Europe on OSH issues. Since its establishment, it has done much to ensure that the profile of OSH is prominent in both EU and national policies and in helping to promote better practices 'on the ground'. The research feedback is generally positive with regard to the types of activities promoted by the Agency and their relevance to target groups, the way in which activities are delivered and the impacts achieved.

2.   The FOPs and their networks have played a very important role in helping the Agency to achieve positive outcomes. FOPs are an essential mechanism through which the Agency can promote its mission. However, the research suggests that following EU enlargement it has become more difficult in many respects to maintain a close relationship with the FOP network. But there are a number of practical steps that could be taken to ensure that the relationship with FOPs is strengthened.

3.   The objectives set out in 'Preparing for Enlargement - Proposal for a Second Generation Agency Network' have either been or are being achieved. In summary, it can be said that whilst good progress has been made, there is still some way to go before the objectives set out in this strategy are fully met. Capacity building in the new EU Member States countries remains a key priority.

4.   Looking ahead, consideration needs to be given to the appropriate mix of delivery methods – decentralized via the FOP network/more centralized with an emphasis on EU level activities. With available resources being spread more thinly across EU Member States, there is a need to develop ways of delivering OSH support actions that ensures that the more limited resources do not jeopardize the achievement of strategic aims. Whilst the adoption of more centralized delivery mechanisms may provide part of the solution, at the same time the research suggests that there is also a need, at a national level, to strengthen the FOP network and their supporting networks since these are essential multipliers. The potential contribution of national networks to the promotion of the Agency's aims is not currently being fully exploited.

5. Overall, the Agency demonstrates high European added value and the evaluation does not point to the need for fundamental changes to the Agency's objectives or how promotes its mission. European added value lies in reinforcing and adding credibility to national OSH promotion, economies of scale, capacity building and strengthening tripartitism, and improving an understanding of OSH issues by adding a European dimension to the picture at a national level. Fundamental changes are not needed and it is more a question of fine-tuning certain aspects of the Agency's operations.

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7.2   Role of National Focal Points

The terms of reference required an assessment of the contribution of the focal points and their networks to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's activities. Overall, the research confirms that FOPs and their networks play a key role in helping the Agency to achieve its mission.

6. The role of FOPs and their capacity to promote the Agency's mission needs to be seen against the backdrop of national OSH structures and traditions. As Section 3 of this report has shown, in some countries responsibility for OSH is centralised in national administrations or in specialized agencies/institutes but elsewhere responsibility for OSH is often shared at a national level by different government departments and/or has been devolved to regional authorities. A further factor influencing the FOP function is changing host structures. In a number of countries, responsibility for OSH (and the FOP host structures) has been transferred from one government department to another, often following elections. Several examples are given in the report of where a lack of continuity in OSH structures and resourcing has had a negative impact on the FOP function. Equally, in some countries, FOP structures have provided an important element of continuity in a constantly changing institutional environment.

7. In general, the support provided by national authorities and host organisations to FOPs is seen as adequate. As highlighted in Section 3, there are circumstances on a day-to-day basis in which it is difficult for FOPs to combine commitments to the Agency with those to their host organisations, but this situation is inevitable and there is probably very little that can be done to avoid it beyond improving time management. More fundamental is the question of whether FOPs have sufficient financial and human resources to perform their function effectively. The evaluation suggests a very mixed picture in this respect.

8. On average, FOPs spend around half their time on Agency-related tasks but this varies considerably from one country to another. Overall, European Week campaigns are the most time-consuming activity for the FOPs, taking up on average just over a third of the time available. Other activities which take up a considerable amount of time are networking, website management and especially the checking of translations.

9. FOPs have a key role in providing the information required by the Agency to define its work programme and strategy, and in ensuring that the Agency's aims are aligned with national priorities. In most cases, FOPs are part of the national administrations and therefore relatively well-placed to fulfill this role. However, some challenges can arise for the FOPs if national plans diverge from the Agency plans. The Agency undertakes consultations with the FOPs to minimize these situations as much as possible, but striking a balance between the national priorities of the EU's 25 Member States has not always been possible. Indeed, since the enlargement of the network, it has become increasingly difficult to ensure that the Agency's priorities always coincide with national ones. Closer consultation between FOPs and the Board/Bureau would improve communication but, equally, the support of host organisations and national networks generally is critical to help identify priorities in the first place.

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7.3   Role of National Networks

10.   Network partners also have an important function in enabling FOPs to understand the needs of workplaces and other end users. FOPs are not usually in direct contact with the workplaces, and the feedback of social partners who are more directly engaged with workplaces, is valuable in designing and targeting relevant outputs in an appropriate way. Often employers' organisations, and trade unions, are relied upon to provide this sort of information. However, the commitment of these kinds of organisations is often weak. The potential contribution of the FOPs and network partners to defining Agency priorities and target groups is currently not being fully exploited.

11. The extent to which FOPs are supported by network partners is also critical to successful delivery of the Agency's objectives. The role of network partners is important in providing a 'multiplier' mechanism through which OSH promotional efforts can be channeled to reach target groups. The situation in different EU Member States varies considerably in this respect. In some countries, there a long tradition of joint working between social partners and strong networks generally through which OSH can be promoted. Elsewhere, including most of the new EU Member States, these structures are still very much in the process of being developed. Indeed, in many of these countries (and several 'old' Member States), our research suggests that it is the FOP function itself that is acting as a catalyst and driver for the development of networks. Another factor influencing the capacity of national networks to deliver Agency priorities is the extent of centralization/decentralization in governmental structures generally.

Recommendations - National Networks

- Board members should be encouraged to participate in network meetings. This is already the case in some countries but not in others. Participation in these meetings would help to improve communication between the Agency and network partners, and visa-versa, and would underline the commitment to strengthening national networks. At the same time, more emphasis should be placed by FOPs on communicating more proactively with Board members (perhaps supported by an electronic newsletter).

- Ways of encouraging the further engagement of network partners should also be investigated. To this end, the Agency should consider organising or participating in national events attended by network partners. There should also be more emphasis on identifying and sharing good practices with regard to developing national networks.

- The Agency and FOPs should extend networking beyond social partners and others already engaged to include collaboration with other national and EU-supported bodies (Euro-Info-Centres, Innovation Relay Centres and other networks that have contact with SMEs).

- Consideration should be given to doing more to secure the involvement of private sector organisations (e.g. workplace health promotion bodies) in national activities, particularly in the organisation of European Week campaigns. This could provide the companies concerned with useful publicity as well as additional resource for FOPs.

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12. A key FOP function is to help organise and promote the European Week campaigns. An important question is whether the campaigns should be essentially sector-focused or thematically orientated. The EWs are a key method of reaching high risk groups which the new Community Strategy for 2007-2012 emphasises should be the Agency's primary target group. With a sector-based approach, key social/network partners whose support is needed to run an effective campaign can be more easily identified. Similarly, the limited scope of a sector-based campaign means that it should be possible to focus efforts more and thereby achieve greater impacts. On the other hand, a thematically-orientated EW campaign has wider relevance, is more inclusive in terms of network partners and does not preclude sector-specific actions.

13. At present, the annual cycle of European Week campaigns makes it difficult to maximise impacts. Running the campaign on a yearly basis has benefits in that, for example, it encourages a certain momentum in the organisation of campaigns which helps to raise its profile. However, difficulties have been encountered with the annual campaign cycle in terms of organisation, as well as the lack of time available for preparation and follow-up of campaign results, and the overlap between different European Week campaigns

14. The Healthy Workplace Initiative (HWI) exemplifies a more centralized approach and is one possible model for campaigning activities generally. Organising activities in a centralised manner should be more cost-effective since there is scope to maximize economies of scale and to streamline administrative tasks.

Recommendations – European Week Campaigns and HWI

- Future European Weeks should be primarily a theme-based but include a sectoral focus. Precisely how this is done should be left to FOPs and reflect situations in different countries but the Agency should provide overall guidelines.

- Consideration should be given to running the EW campaign over a two-year period, starting in 2008-09. This could help overcome some of the difficulties currently faced with the campaign organisation as well as ensuring that themes are publicised and followed up. The first year could be devoted to promoting of the overall campaign theme with the second year focusing on particular sectors and high risk target groups.

- Closer collaboration with SLIC campaigns should be encouraged so as to ensure that there are no overlaps and that synergies can be exploited as efficiently as possible.

- The approach being adopted to European Week 2007 offering FOPs the option of centralized support along the lines of the HWI or the FOP subsidy for decentralized national activities is to be welcomed. It will be important to evaluate the advantages (and any disadvantages) of the differing approaches as a basis for deciding on the most appropriate campaigning approach in the future.

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15. The amount of time spent by FOPs on translation tasks is disproportionate with the service being provided by the Translation Centre being heavily criticised. There are considerable differences between the amounts of time spent by different FOPs on translation tasks. Some spend no time on this at all whereas in other cases this can take up 88

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50% of their time. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, there seem to be differences in the quality of the translated materials received by FOPs in different countries, which means that some have more work to do in checking documents than others. Secondly, differences exist in how some FOPs tackle translation tasks (in particular, some FOPs are able to share this work with other FOPs where there is a common language). Last but not least, some host institutions have translation services to carry out the work so that the FOP does not spend as much time on this him/herself. Overall, the quality of work undertaken by the Translation Centre is now improving although it is still seen by most FOPs to be unsatisfactory.

Recommendations – Translation of Agency Materials

- The possibility of using local translation services should be explored, although it is recognised that the Agency's Regulation states that the Translation Centre should be used.

- Closer contacts between the Translation Service and the FOPs should be encouraged so as to ensure that FOPs views can be taken into account at the earliest stage possible. There are several examples of where this is already happening and the outcome has improved the quality of translations.

- There should be increased discretion at a national level to decide which Agency materials to translate. This function could be undertaken by Board Members, or by FOPs in consultation with network members, or jointly by all three parties. However, there is a strong argument for core publication such as the Fact Sheets, to be always translated by the Agency.

7.5 Networking Between National Focal Points

16. The extent of networking between FOPs is difficult to gauge, partly due to the many forms that it takes. Cooperation between FOPs can be broadly divided into two types: joint working on particular tasks (e.g. translation of European Week campaign materials) and, secondly, and more informal and less focused networking. The extent of this latter type of networking between FOPs is particularly to gauge. Overall, there is a very mixed picture - networking between FOPs is quite well developed in some cases, especially where it focuses on practical tasks, but not systematic or well developed in other cases. Differing OSH frameworks and practices are an important factor that influences the extent of networking. In particular, where these practices are relatively strong, there is less incentive to develop cross-border links although most FOPs recognize that they have a role to play in transferring know-how

17. The sharing of good practices, joint working on translation tasks and the strengthening of the FOP function are particularly important benefits of this cooperation. Where cooperation does take place it is mostly in connection with translation tasks. There are many examples of collaboration on the translation of Agency materials (e.g. between Austria/Germany, Belgium/France, and brochures produced in Poland and Sweden have been translated and reprinted in Lithuania and Estonia respectively). Other FOPs

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recognise that potential for this kind of collaboration exists, but is not fully taken advantage of it. The sharing of good practices is also an important feature of FOP networking.

Recommendations – Networking Between FOPs

- It would help to reintroduce the practice whereby FOPs hold a meeting on their own to discuss issues of common concern. This would make it easier for FOPs to agree on the issues to be discussed with the Agency and to communicate messages more clearly.

- Consideration should be given to holding FOP meetings at different locations around Europe, perhaps on an alternating basis so that Bilbao continues to be the main venue but every other meeting is held somewhere else. One possibility would be for FOPs whose country holds the EU Presidency to host these sessions. The advantage of this approach would be twofold: firstly, it would strengthen networking between FOPs and enable them to learn more about each others' ways of operating; and, secondly, it would be a symbolic gesture suggesting a more equal partnership with the Agency.

- Campaigning actions taking place across countries, for example within the context of the European Week, collaboration between FOPs on joint initiatives and sharing good practices, should be encouraged and supported.

- The Agency should facilitate regional meetings and 'study visits' between countries. The results should be presented or discussed at FOP meetings and disseminated more widely. Details of joint initiatives, collaboration to produce materials, or in the organisation of campaigns, could be disseminated through the Extranet, for example.

- Greater use should be made of ICT to strengthen the relationship with and between FOPs. In particular, the Extranet could be developed so that there is increased scope for 'virtual' networking.

7.6   Relationship between the Agency and FOPs

Terms of reference: Assess the Agency's role in supporting the focal points' and their networks' activities.

18. Feedback on the Cooperation Agreement as a framework for joint working between the Agency and FOPs is generally favourable. Most FOPs consider that sufficient opportunities existed to discuss the Cooperation Agreement and specific tasks with the Agency. There is similar feedback on the Work Programme. However, in terms of on-going communication, while the Extranet is generally perceived to be an effective communications mechanism, the main difficulty from the point of view of the FOPs is that it is not kept up to date. Thus, FOPs frequently receive reminders of work being late that has not yet even been set.

19.   At an operational level, the working relationship between the staff from the Bilbao office and FOPs is good. However, there is a widespread feeling that the relationship between the Agency and FOPs is not as strong as it used to be. One reason for this is that with EU enlargement, which has not been matched by significantly increased financial allocations to the Agency, it is more difficult to maintain a close relationship with all FOPs. A related concern is that there is not enough face-to-face contact with Agency

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staff and that it has become more difficult to find out who is responsible for particular matters. At present, direct contact is limited almost entirely to the three FOP meetings in Bilbao and the scope for detailed discussions with particular members of the Agency's staff are obviously very limited. As pointed out in the report, at present there are only two Agency staff from the Network Secretariat helping to coordinate the FOP network. Because they have other responsibilities, this is equivalent to about one full-time person.

20. The FOP meetings in Bilbao are an important part of the consultation process but more could be done to maximize the benefits. FOP network meetings are held three times a year in Bilbao and there are also other consultations – generally informal – in addition to these events between the Agency and FOPs. However, many FOPs see the meetings in Bilbao as no more than a formality, arguing that there is not enough real discussion and that the results are in any case not taken into account by the Agency in reaching decisions. Some FOPs from EU10 Member States have voiced a concern that these countries are still less ready to put forth their ideas in FOP meetings. However, it is important to note that this not simply a difference between new and old Member States (some FOPs also felt that a divide exists between FOPs within the EU15, particularly between those who have acted in the FOP role for a long period of time and those who are new to the work).

21. At a more strategic level, feedback from the evaluation suggests that whilst there is adequate scope for FOPs to make an input to preparing events and campaigns, this is less so with more strategic issues – e.g. identifying target group needs and in ensuring that Agency priorities take into account national priorities. The area where the FOPs feel that they make the smallest contribution is over decisions on the allocation of financial resources to different projects or priorities. Not all FOPs want a say in more strategic issues of this kind. However, others feel that there should at least be an opportunity for FOPs to make an input if they feel that they have an important contribution to make.

22. There is a perception that the Agency's strategic planning procedures are not flexible enough to allow changes to work plans to be easily made. From a FOP perspective, the key question is how flexible the Agency's strategic planning procedures are and, in particular, whether there is sufficient scope to adjust tasks/objectives during the course of implementing actions if changing circumstances suggest that changes are needed. Most FOPs doe not consider that there is enough flexibility. But Work Programmes, contracts with the Topic Centres, and the financial commitments and contracting procedures that underpin these and other activities, need to be decided well in advance. Similarly, the Agency is bound by the constraints of the European Commission's financial regulations. That said, circumstances can change and at times adjustments need to be accommodated. The Work Programme does allow for changes to be made during the course of implementation and FOPs are asked to contact the Agency if this is the case. Thus while certain procedures could be improved by the Agency, FOPs need to make full use of the flexibilities the current arrangements already have built into them.

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Recommendations – Relationship Between Agency and FOPs

- There is a need for more flexibility in the way in which FOP work plans are implemented with, in particular, the opportunity to adjust objectives, resource allocations, etc, in a timely and non-bureaucratic way if circumstances change.

- There is also room for improved planning with regard to the implementation of the work plans, in terms of clearer timetables etc, as well as more effective use of the Extranet function. Both the Agency and FOPs need to ensure that their inputs to the Extranet are kept up-to-date.

- Agency staff should be given geographical responsibilities and carry out more visits to EU Member States to strengthen the relationship with FOPs and their network partners. This would be mutually beneficial: Agency staff would get to know individual FOPs better and obtain a more in-depth appreciation of priorities in different countries while FOPs would gain a better understanding of Agency's priorities and have more scope for discussing issues of concern to them in depth.

- Consideration should be given to increasing the Agency resources available for network coordination, either by assigning additional staff specifically to this role in the Network Secretariat and/or giving staff geographical responsibilities from other units. If the previous recommendation is adopted, and if each EU Member State is visited at least once a year, this would require around 230 staff days of time (100-150 for preparing, carrying out and following up visits and a further 3-4 days per country for on-going contacts throughout the year).

- Given EU enlargement, consideration should be given to establishing a FOP Steering Group as a way of helping to coordinate the FOPs' position on issues and ensuring that their voice is heard.

- Where not already the case, the working relationship between FOPs and Governing Board members at a national level should be strengthened so that EU-OSHA Board meetings can be used by FOPs as a way of raising issues. Consideration might be given to FOPs making an input (perhaps via a nominated representative or a steering group – see earlier recommendation) to Bureau meetings which generally take place in Bilbao the day after the FOPs meet.

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23. Resourcing issues are in many cases a key factor determining the ability of FOPs to carry out Agency tasks. With respect to human resources, some FOPs simply do not have the time themselves, or the support staff, needed - half the FOPs consider that they do not have sufficient time for the carrying out all Agency-related tasks. However, despite this, in many cases the problems are not caused by a shortage of human resources, or time, but more by the difficulties in obtaining the necessary financial resources. Although the FOP subsidy is relevant is this respect, this assistance from the Agency is modest in scale and demonstrates only partial additionality. More important is the capacity of FOPs to raise funds from host organisations and network partners. More generally, in all countries, the role of national networks of OSH specialists, social partners, etc, is also critical from a non-financial perspective to successful implementation of FOP work plans. The research

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feedback suggests that far more needs to be done in most countries to strengthen the contribution of network partners.

Recommendations – FOP Subsidy

- The FOP subsidy, in its current form, only demonstrates limited additionality and should be discontinued.

- However, if the current FOP subsidy scheme is discontinued, this should be on the basis that (a) it is not discontinued before an alternative is introduced that continues to provide assistance to support national EW campaigns; (b) the Agency consults with FOPs closely over the introduction of an alternative system; and (c) some provision is made, at least for a transitional period, to provide support directly to FOPs who genuinely need it (our research suggests that in the case of EW2005, six FOPs, mainly from EU10 countries, would not have been able to organise any form of EW campaign without the subsidy. On the basis of an average grant allocation of €30-40,000, this would mean a provision of around €200,000).

- As a way of testing the best approach, the arrangements for European Week 2007, i.e. offering a 'European Week Assistance Package' or the FOP subsidy, is helpful and the results should be evaluated to determine which option is preferable for and produces the best results in terms of the effectiveness of campaigns.

- The Agency, with the support of the European Commission, should encourage national authorities to provide additional resources to supplement the FOP subsidy. For example, national funding might be used to help customize Agency materials more closely to national circumstances and target groups.

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24. The integration of FOPs from the EU10 Member States has been successfully achieved. Most FOPs from the EU10 Member States have developed the capacity to make an input to the preparation of work programmes, specifically with regard to identifying the needs of intended beneficiaries. In many of the EU10 countries, however, FOP networks are still relatively weak – reflecting institutional weaknesses generally – and this means that it is difficult to obtain the inputs at a national level that are needed for the FOPs to play a proactive and positive role at a European level. FOPs from the EU10 countries

7.7   Target Groups, Products and Services, and Impacts

25. The Agency's target groups are quite well defined but cover a very broad field and the question is how key targets should be prioritized and most effectively reached. The overall target group for the Agency's activities and products is defined in its 2002 Communication Strategy as being policy makers responsible for the development of OSH-related legislation; OSH policy 'shapers' (including trade unions and employers' representatives); the OSH professional community; information providers and intermediaries; and end user (employers and those with a direct influence on workers' OSH). This is a very broad definition and our research suggests that there is sometimes uncertainly over whether products and services should be designed specifically for end users (workplaces) or for intermediaries (social partners, OSH specialists, etc). Compared with

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some other EU agencies, EU-OSHA's target groups (in particular, smaller businesses) are very large and prioritization is therefore needed.

26. A key issue is the extent to which the Agency's products and services are tailored to the needs of different target groups. At present, the Agency (through the Topic Centres) is responsible for producing most of the material used by FOPs carrying out Agency-related tasks. As a result, there is some degree of trade-off between benefits of scale obtained, and the lack of local relevance and effectiveness of the materials. There is certainly a view amongst FOPs and network partners that materials produced by the Agency are often rather too 'European' in nature and fail to address issues from a national perspective, thereby reducing their relevance. Thus, some information on OSH issues is not detailed or analytical enough to be of interest to specialists but at the same time is not practical enough for workplaces. This task of tailoring information produced by the Agency to particular target groups is not a function that can be entirely undertaken centrally and the question is therefore whether FOPs and their network partners should be doing more in this respect.

27. European Week campaigns and the dissemination of information via the Agency and national websites are generally seen as the most effective ways of reaching target audiences. There are, however, differing views on the effectiveness of different methods. For example, FOPs consider European Week campaigns as being more effective than network partners. However, there is broad agreement on the increasing importance of electronic dissemination of information. The Agency's website it is an important source of information and, to varying degrees, the network websites make heavy use of the content. The importance, and quality, of the national websites vary, however. In some countries, the Agency website provides a main gateway to information on OSH issues. Elsewhere, other websites, particularly the websites of national OSH institutes, are more used.

28. In addition to the existing methods the Agency and FOPs use to directly reach target groups, other ways of disseminating information and raising awareness of OSH issues are being developed and this should be continued. Apart from the role of network partners, closer joint working with other EU-supported networks, in particular the Euro Info Centres, is being developed and this should considerably enhance the effectiveness of dissemination efforts. The new Community Strategy highlights the need to do more to mainstream OSH issues in other EU policies and feedback from this evaluation suggests that more should be done by the Agency to exploit possibilities in this respect. Ensuring that OSH priorities are addressed through the implementation of Structural Fund programmes, especially measures aimed at SMEs, is an obvious priority in this respect.

29. Overall, feedback from the evaluation suggests that the activities of the Agency and FOP networks demonstrate a high degree of European added value. The European dimension is important in many countries in enhancing the credibility of activities to promote OSH, capacity building, sharing good practices and more efficient ways of working generally. However, perceptions regarding European added value vary considerably and in some EU Member States, generally those with relatively highly developed OSH practices and systems, the benefits of Agency activities are not seen as favourably.

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30. Apart from the benefits associated with gaining access to wider EU expertise and good practices in the OSH field, the technical and other support provided by the Agency, and networking between FOPs, are also important manifestations of European added value. Although the FOP subsidy only demonstrates partial additionality overall, the financial support provided by the Agency is very important in some countries because of the limited resources available from purely national sources to promote OSH policies. There are also economies of scale to be gained from certain activities being undertaken at a European level, for example the preparation of European Week campaign materials, and benefits from the European branding of OSH products and services. These aspects of European added value are more pronounced in some countries than others, often depending on perceptions generally regarding EU membership but also on how well developed OSH practices and policies are. The European dimension is important in many countries in enhancing the credibility of activities to promote OSH, capacity building, sharing good practices and more efficient ways of working generally. However, perceptions regarding European added value vary considerably and in some EU Member States, generally those with relatively highly developed OSH practices and systems, the benefits of Agency activities are not seen as favourably.

31. The Agency has developed tools to assess the impact of some initiatives on target groups but performance measurement methods should be developed to embrace the full range of its activities. European Week campaigns are subject to external evaluation while other initiatives such as the Healthy Workplace Initiative have been assessed internally. However, there is a need to develop a performance measurement system for the full range of Agency activities so that the impact on target audiences, and relative effectiveness of different activities, can be monitored on a more comprehensive and on-going basis. The survey work undertaken as part of this evaluation, in particular the survey of end users via *OSHmail*, provides an example of how this might be tackled. Likewise if Agency staff were to undertake field trips to visit FOPs (see earlier recommendation), this could be used an opportunity to assess activities and to facilitate a sharing of good practices.

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Recommendations – Agency Products and Services
• Target groups should be more clearly prioritized. Because the Agency has a broad range of target groups, and a potentially very large number of SME 'end users', prioritization of targets is essential if outputs are to be relevant and impacts maximized. A greater emphasis on providing information that is practical, appropriate for the particular target group, and that focuses on good practices is needed.
• In addition to existing methods of reaching target audiences, new methods should be developed including joint working with other EU-supported networks (in particular, the Euro Info Centres) and mainstreaming OSH priorities in other EU programmes such as the Structural Funds.
• More could be done to make the Agency's website user-friendly, particularly by making it easier for end users to identify relevant information and to navigate generally. The fact that much of information available from the Agency's website is mainly in English is also widely regarded as a constraint on it being used, especially by end users.
• Performance measurement tools should be developed so that the impact on target audiences, and relative effectiveness of different Agency activities, can be monitored on a more comprehensive and on-going basis. Apart from periodic end user surveys, Agency staff could be asked to undertake an assessment of FOP and network activities as part of their field trips (see earlier recommendation), using this as an opportunity to highlight good and less good practices based on experience in other countries.

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Note: FOPs made arrangements for interviews/group discussions with network partners (* = OSHA Board members).

Country	Name	Organisation
NATIONAL INTERVIEWS		
Austria		
	Christa Schweng*	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich
	Julie Lischka*	Arbeiterkammer Wien
	Charlotte Salomon	BMWA
	Franz Kaida	VÖST
	Gabriele Kaida	BMVIT-VAI
	Christian Schenk	AUVA
	Martina Häckel-Bucher	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit
Belgium		
	Kris De Meester	VBO (Verbond der Belgische Ondernemingen) - Federation of Belgian Employers
	François Philips	ABVV (representative of the Unions)
	Stefaan Henderieckx	PVI (Provinciaal Veiligheidsinstituut Antwerpen) - Provincial Safety institute of Antwerp
	Mr. Vermeylen	NAVB (Preventive Institute for the Construction Sector
	Frank Dehasque	FPS ELSD – Directorate General for the Humanisation of Work
Cyprus		
	Leandros Nicolaides*	Department of Labour Inspection, Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
	Marios Kourtellis	Senior Labour Inspection Officer, Department of Labour Inspection
	Marios Charalambous, Labour Inspector	Department of Labour Inspection (dealing with the FOP activities)
	Stelios Christodoulou	DEOK, employees trade union
	Nicos Andreou	PEO, employees trade union
	Christina Vasila*	OEB, Chamber of Commerce
	Mimis Theodotou	ETYK, bank employees trade union
	Maria Theocharidou	SEK, employees trade union
Czech Rep.		
	Ladislav Boucek	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic
	Igor Mrkvanek	Czech Mining Authority
	Jana Spilkova	Czech Statistical Office
	Lidmila Kleinova	Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic
	Daniela Kubickova	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic
	Klara Sadilkova	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

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Denmark		
	Tove Loft, FOP manager	Department for Legal Advice and International Relations of the Danish Working Environment Authority (FOP)
	Jan Kahr Frederiksen*	FTF (trade union side)
	Thomas Philbert	DA (employer side)
	Brian Knudsen	Working Environment Information Centre
	Jan Gybel	Danish Working Environment Authority
	Anders Kabel	Danish work environment advisory-system of multi-disciplinary, preventive service units (BST-forening)
Estonia		
	Tiit Kaadu	FOP, Adviser in the Working Life Development Department, Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia
	Ulo Kristjuhan	Tallinn University of Technology
	Tonu Vare	Estonian Labour Inspectorate
	Representative	Estonian Health Care Board
Finland		
	Erkki Auvinen	Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees
	Suvi Lehtinen	Finnish Institute for Occupational Health
	Pekka Olkinuora	Acoustic Society of Finland, Finnish Institute for Occupational Health
	Rauno Toivonen	Confederation of Finnish Industries
	Erkki Yrjänheikki	Finnish Ministry for Social Affairs and Health, FOP
	Hannu Stålhammar	Finnish Ministry for Social Affairs and Health, FOP
France		
	Robert Piccoli*	Ministry of Employment, Social Cohesion and Housing (FOP)
	Pierre Paolini	Ministry of Employment, Social Cohesion and Housing
Germany		
	Reinhard Gerber	Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour
	Ellen Zwink	BAuA
	Hella Skoruppa	Länder Ausschuss für Arbeitschutz und Sicherheitstechnik
	Sven Timm	HVBG-BGZ
Greece		
	Ioannis Konstantopoulos, FOP manager	Directorate for OSH Information Management, Training and Monitoring of Policies on OSH issues
	Antonis Christodolou*	Director of the Directorate for OSH Information Management, Training and Monitoring of Policies on OSH issues
	Spyros Dontas	Manager of the Hellenic Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (ELINYAE)

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Hungary		
	Károly György*	National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions
	Janos Gador	FOP, Head of the International Department Hungarian Labour Inspectorate
	Judit Nosztrai	Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists
	Szots Tibor	Mining Bureau of Hungary
	Representative	Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions
Ireland		
	Michelle McHugh	European Information Centre (FOP)
	Angus Laverty	Health and Safety Authority
Italy		
	Sergio Perticaroli	Istituto Superiore per la Prevenzione Seguranza e la Sicurezza del Lavoro (ISPESL)
	Francesca Grosso	Istituto Superiore per la Prevenzione Seguranza e la Sicurezza del Lavoro (ISPESL)
	Manuella Brunetti	Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e dela Piccola e Media Impresa (CNA)
	Gabriella Galli	CGL: Confederazione Generale Italiana, CISL: Confederazione Italiana Sindicati Lavoratori, UIL: Unione Italiana del Lavoro
Latvia		
	Margarita Dukalska	State Labour Inspectorate, FOP
	Liene Maurite	State Labour Inspectorate, FOP
	Ziedonis Antapsons*	Latvian Free Trade Union Federation
	Renārs Lūsis*	Ministry of Welfare
	Ivars Vanadziņš	Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health)
	Edgars Korčagins*	Latvian Employers' Confederation (by tel)
Lithuania		
	Nerita Scot	National Focal Point
	Alfonsas Gedgaudas	Chairman of Trade Unions Federation of the Agriculture
	Aleksandars Kuznecovas	Director UAB: Sadata, member of the Committee of Social Affairs and Labour of Confederation of Lithuanian Business Employers
	Ausra Stankiuviene	chief specialist of Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority
Luxembourg		
	Paul Weber*	National Labour Inspectorate (FOP)
	Mr. Ambrosini	National Labour Inspectorate
	Dr. Pierre Blaise	Employers representative, Service de Santé au Travail de l'Industrie - S.T.I. Asbl
	Dr. Robert Goerens	
	Dr. Carlo Steffes	Government representative, Division de la Santé au Travail
Malta		
	Romina Rieck Zahra	Heath and Safety Authority (Ministry of Family

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		and Social Solidarity)
Netherlands		
	Henk Schrama, FOP manager	Arbo Platform Nederland/TNO
	Viola van Guldener	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
	Arie Woltmeijer	CVN - National Federation of Christian trade unions
	Mario van Mierlo	MKB Royal Association (SME employer organisation)
Poland		
	Agnieszka Młodzka-Stybel	CIOP-PIB (FOP)
	Alfred Brzozowski	CIOP-PIB (FOP)
	Joanna Kniaź-Hawrot	CIOP-PIB (FOP)
	Wioletta Klimaszewska	CIOP-PIB (FOP)
	Jerzy Kowalski	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
	Jolanta Turek	school teacher
	Maciej Boguszewski	National Labour Inspectorate
	Marcin Kopron	Zakłady Azotowe Puławy – private company
	Michał Graczyk	ORLEN S.A. – private company
	Alicja Barwicka	Social Insurance Institution
Portugal		
	Manuela Calado Iolanda Ribeiro	National Authority for Working Conditions (FOP)
	Dr. Álvaro Durão	Ministry of Health
	Engº Jorge Fradique	Sociedade Portuguesa de Acústica (company)
	Engº Tudela Engº Sousa Ribeiro	EDP Empresa Distribuidora de Energia (company)
	Engº Moreira	Salvador Caetano (company)
	Dr. Luís de Freitas	Associação das Empresas Prestadoras de Serviços (social partner)
	Dr. Luís Lopes*	UGT- União Geral dos Trabalhadores (social partner)
	Sr. Armando Farias	CGTP.In-Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores (social partner)
	Sr. Martins	Sindicato da Construção Civil Madeira e Mármores (social partner)
	Engº Joaquim Agria	ANEOP - Associação Nacional das Empresas de Obras Públicas (social partner)
	Sr. Marcelino Pena Costa*	CCP - Confederação do Comércio de Portugal (social partner)
	Engª Mariana	Universidade Lusófona
	Professor Francisco Rebelo	Universidade Nova de Lisboa - Faculdade de Motricidade Humana
	Sr. Victor Reis	Câmara Municipal de Sintra (municipality)
	Dra Rosário Pedrosa Drª Ana Rodrigues	Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (municipality)
	Drª Maria de Lurdes	CENFIC- Centro de Formação Profissional da

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	Monteiro	Indústria da Construção (training centre)
	Drª Isabel Santos	Revista Segurança (magazine)
Slovakia		
	Daniel Schwartz	FOP, National Labour Inspectorate
	Laurencia Jancurova	Senior Advisor, National Labour Inspectorate
	Jana Gibodova	Senior Advisor, National Labour Inspectorate
	Michal Sukovsky	Director of Labour Inspection Department
	Jozef Rajzinger	Republic Trade Union representative
Slovenia		
	Tatjana Petriček*	Head of OSH Department, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (FOP)
	Vladka Komel, FOP Manager	OSH Department, Ministry
	Igor Antauer	General Secretary, Association of Employers for Craft Activities of Slovenia
	Maja Skorupan	Association of Employers of Slovenia
Spain		
	Isabel Dudziñski	Comisiones Obreras-CCOO (Spanish Trade Union)
	Jose Ignacio Torres	Confederación empresarial de la pequeña y mediana empresa- CEPYME(Spanish Confederation of SMEs)
	Isabel Díaz	Unión General de Trabajadores - UGT (Spanish Trade Union)
	Yolanda Palacio	National Institute for Safety and Hygiene at Work
	Pilar Casla	National Institute for Safety and Hygiene at Work
Sweden		
	Bertil Remaeus*	Arbetsmiljöverket
	Elisabet Delang	Work Environment Authority, FOP
	Kenny Kvarnström	Association of Swedish Engineering Industries
	Börje Sjöholm	Non-Manual Workers' Union
UK		
	Jason Batt	Health and Safety Executive, FOP
	Malcolm Darvill*	Health and Safety Executive, FOP
	Sarah Hamilton	IOSH
	Janet Asherson*	Confederation of British Industries
	Steve Walter	EEF
EU-LEVEL INTERVIEWS AND INTERVIEWS WITH OTHER AGENCIES		
Commission	Anne Degrand	DG EMPL
Commission	Ramon Biosca	Head of Safety and Health Unit, DG EMPL
CEDEFOP	Steve Bainbridge	Head of Service, Publications and dissemination, CEDEFOP
EEA	Paul McAleavey	Head of group EDO1 - Client relations and effectiveness evaluations, EEA
EEA	Galina Georgieva Hristova	Head of group CCA1 - Management Board, Eionet and Scientific Committee, EEA
EURO-	Janet Smith	Programme Manager for Monitoring and

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FOUND		Evaluation EUROFOUND
EURO-FOUND	Elisabet Lagerlöf	Head of Information and Communication, EUROFOUND
EU-OSHA INTERVIEWS		
Hans-Horst Konkolewsky		Director (until September 2006)
Andrew Smith		Head of Unit, Communications and Promotion
Brenda O'Brien		Liaison Officer – OSHA Brussels Office
Jesper Bejer		Network Manager (Network Secretariat)
Sabine Sommer		Network Manager (Network Secretariat)
Bruno Thiebaud		Communication Manager (Communications Unit)
Sarah Copsey		Project Manager (Working Environment Unit)
Tim Tregenza		Project Manager (Working Environment Unit)
William Cockburn		Project Manager (Working Environment Unit)
Marta Urrutia		Project Manager (Communications Unit)
Pascale Turlotte		Administrative Assistant (Communications Unit)
Mónica Azaola		Secretary, Communications Unit (translations)

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Analysis of Survey Responses

Analysis of Responses to Network Partner Survey

Network Partner Survey Summary									
Country	National network	Government Rep.	Employer Rep.	Worker Rep.	Other members	Total	Contacted	Responses	%
Austria		2	2	3	16	23	23	7	30.4
Belgium	2	11	4	4	16	37	37	3	8.1
Cyprus		3	4	5	2	14	14	1	7.1
Czech Rep.		16	1	1	1	19	19	2	10.5
Germany		8	1	1	3	13	13	5	38.5
Denmark		9	19	19	24	71	71	6	8.5
Estonia		13	1	1	9	24	24	4	16.7
Spain	27		4	4	20	55	23	3	13.0
Finland		17	4	3	14	38	37	8	21.6
France	None supplied							0	0.0
Greece		9		1	10	20	14	0	0.0
Hungary		2	1	1	5	9	9	1	11.1
Ireland		1	6	3	10	20	19	0	0.0
Italy		18	13	12	51	94	82	8	9.8
Lithuania		12	4	3	9	28	28	3	10.7
Luxembourg		3	3	3	16	25	24	2	8.3
Latvia		5	1	1	1	8	8	4	50.0
Malta		9	4	7	8	28	28	4	14.3
Netherlands		2	3	3	5	13	13	3	23.1
Poland	no breakdown					38	34	1	2.9
Portugal	no breakdown					48	47	4	8.5
Sweden		8	4	5	3	20	20	0	0.0
Slovenia	1	4	5	6	21	37	37	8	21.6
Slovakia	4	16	6	10	31	67	54	5	9.3
UK			1	1		2	2	1	50.0
Totals	**34**	**168**	**92**	**96**	**275**	**751**	**680**	**83**	**12.2**

Analysis of Responses to End User Survey

Country	Responses	Country	Responses
Austria	10	Lithuania	4
Belgium	16	Luxembourg	7
Cyprus	3	Malta	8
Czech Rep.	4	Netherlands	15
Denmark	8	Other	110
Estonia	2	Poland	8
Finland	21	Portugal	35
France	55	Slovakia	2
Germany	78	Slovenia	6
Greece	10	Spain	116
Hungary	2	Sweden	17
Ireland	30	UK	137
Italy	67	**Total**	**771**

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End User Questionnaire

1. Please check the box (or boxes) that best describes your organisation:

Public authority ☐   Business ☐   OSH specialist ☐   Trade union ☐   Employer organisation ☐

If none of the above, please explain:

 Please indicate which country you are based in:

2. Which activities supported by the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (or the National Focal Point) has your organisation been involved with or benefited from? Please indicate below where 1 = close involvement/considerable benefits and 3 = no involvement at all/no benefits at all:

Activities	Involvement			Benefits		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Publications and research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good practice guides and other tools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
European Week campaigns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Website and electronic dissemination of information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conferences, seminars and other events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Networking with other organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advice to policy makers and other similar activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify below	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other activities:

3. Overall, how relevant are the activities of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the National Focal Point to your organisation and the needs of its employees or members? Please tick one box:

Very relevant ☐   Quite relevant ☐   Not relevant at all ☐

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4. Looking at the situation in your country generally, which Agency or National Focal Point activities have been most effective in reaching target groups and raising awareness/promoting good practice with regard to safety and health at work (where 1= very effective and 3 = not effective at all):

Activities	1	2	3	Don't know
Publications and research	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good practice guides and other tools	☐	☐	☐	☐
European Week campaigns	☐	☐	☐	☐
Website and electronic dissemination of information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conferences, seminars and other events	☐	☐	☐	☐
Networking with key partners	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of advice to policy makers and other similar activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other activities:

5. To what extent, in your view, have different target groups in your country been reached by the Agency's and the National Focal Point's activities? Please indicate below (where 1 = high level of reach and impact/3 = low level of reach and impact):

Target group	1	2	3	Don't know
General public	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade unions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workplaces in SMEs (enterprises with less than 250 employees)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workplaces in large businesses	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health and safety at work specialists	☐	☐	☐	☐
Labour inspectors	☐	☐	☐	☐
National media and other information providers	☐	☐	☐	☐
National policy- and decision makers	☐	☐	☐	☐

6.   Overall, do you consider that the Agency and the National Focal Point have developed an appropriate range of activities?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you have answered no, please explain:

7.   How important is the European dimension to activities undertaken at a national level to promote improved safety and health at work?

Vital   ☐   Quite important ☐   Not important at all ☐   No opinion ☐

If you do *not* consider the European dimension important, please explain:

Survey Questionnaires

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8. Overall, how effectively does the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work carry out its activities in your view?

Very effectively ☐   Quite effectively ☐   Not effectively at all ☐   No opinion ☐

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9. Overall, how effectively does the National Focal Point carry out its activities in your view?

Very effectively ☐   Quite effectively ☐   Not effectively at all ☐   No opinion ☐

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10.   In general, do other organisations in your country provide the support needed to successfully implement the Agency's Work Programme in your country? Please indicate (where 1 = excellent contribution and 3 = poor contribution):

Key partners	1	2	3	Don't know
National authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
OSH specialists and agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade unions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Universities and research bodies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐

European Week 2005 'Stop that Noise' Campaign

As part of the evaluation work, we are also examining the European Week 'Stop that Noise' campaign that took place in 2005. We would be grateful for your views on the following questions:

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11.   Were you aware of the European Week campaign 'Stop that Noise' that took place in October 2005?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If the answer is yes, did you participate in any activities or receive any information? Please tick the appropriate boxes:

European Week 2005 Activities	Yes	No
Conferences, seminars/workshops, training events, etc	☐	☐
European Week Closing Event (October 2005)	☐	☐
Exhibitions, special events and activities	☐	☐
Campaign materials	☐	☐
Workplace visits	☐	☐
Good practice award schemes and other competitions	☐	☐
Publicity campaigns (e.g. press, TV and radio adverts)	☐	☐
EW 2005 'Stop that Noise' website(s)	☐	☐
EW 2005 Closing Event/Summit (December)	☐	☐
Other activities (please explain below)	☐	☐

Other activities:

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12. Have you taken any actions following European Week 2005 to reduce noise at the workplace in your organisation?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

---

13. In your view, which European Week 2005 'Stop that Noise' campaigning activities were the most effective in raising awareness/promoting good practice with regard to combating noise (1= very effective/3 = not effective at all)?

European Week 2005 Activities	1	2	3	Don't know
Conferences, seminars/workshops, training events, etc	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exhibitions, special events and activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campaign materials	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workplace visits	☐	☐	☐	☐
On line charter	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good practice award schemes and other competitions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Publicity campaigns (e.g. press, TV and radio adverts)	☐	☐	☐	☐
EW 2005 'Stop that Noise' website(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐
EW 2005 Closing Event/Summit (December)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other activities:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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14.   Overall, how important in your view was the European dimension to the effectiveness of the European Week 2005 campaign in your country to combat noise at work?

Vital ☐   Quite important ☐   Not important at all ☐   No opinion ☐

FOP Questionnaire

1.   Cooperation Agreement and Resourcing of the FOP Function

1.1 In your view, do the Cooperation Agreement and extranet work plans provide an appropriate <u>framework</u> for carrying out FOP functions at a national level, e.g. are tasks defined clearly enough?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

Are there any particular aspects/procedures that could be improved? Please explain below:

1.2 Do you have sufficient opportunities to discuss the Cooperation Agreement and <u>specific tasks, timescales, etc</u> set out in the Annex with the Agency?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

Are there any particular aspects/procedures that could be improved? Please explain below:

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1.3 Which tasks take up most of your time? Based on experience over the past 6-12 months, please provide a rough breakdown of how the <u>time available for FOP tasks</u> set out in the Cooperation Agreement and extranet work plans has been divided.

Tasks (Past 6-12 months)	%
Networking (meetings, FOP subsidy reports, HWI, etc)	
Consultation (Aging workforce, Risk Observatory, etc)	
Website management	
Europe Week (2005 follow up, 2006 and preparations for 2007)	
Checking translations and other tasks relating to documents	
Other tasks (please specify):	
Total	**100%**

1.4 Do you have enough time to undertake FOP tasks? Please provide a rough indication of the <u>time you devote to Agency activities/other activities</u> (e.g. over the past six months):

Allocation of time	%
Time devoted to Agency activities	
Time devoted to other activities	
Total	**100%**

Yes I have enough time for Agency activities ☐   No I do not have enough time for Agency activities ☐

1.5 Do you have enough <u>support from ~~~~al sources</u> to carry out the FOP function? If yes, please indicate the number of people wh~~~~~~~ailable to help you.

Yes ☐   Number of people   No other resources available ☐

1.6 How helpful is your <u>host organisation</u> in making it possible for you to carry out FOP tasks? For example, if you need more time for a particular task, is your host organisation flexible with regard to other commitments?

Yes, the host organisation is very supportive ☐   No, the host organisation is not very supportive ☐

If you have answered no, what more could your host organisation do? Please explain:

---

2.   Preparation of the Agency's Work Programme

2.1 The Agency's annual <u>Work Programme</u> provides the overall framework for FOP activities. Do you have sufficient opportunities to help define the objectives and priorities?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If you selected 'no', please explain why and how this situation might be improved:

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2.2 To what extent have you been able to contribute to the <u>strategic planning process</u> that underpins preparation of the Agency's annual Work Programme? Please assess your contribution to each of the activities listed below (where 1 = major contribution and 3 = no contribution at all).

FOP inputs to strategic planning	1	2	3
Identifying target group needs			
Ensuring that Agency priorities take into account national priorities			
Ensuring that the views of key partners at a national level are taken into account			
Developing products and services (e.g. good practice guides)			
Preparing events and campaigns (e.g. Europe Week)			
Decisions on the allocation of financial resources to different projects/priorities			
Other aspects (please specify):			

2.3 Do <u>network partners </u>from your country make an input to FOP discussions with the Agency on strategic planning and the identification of national priorities?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If no, please explain how network partners could make more of an input:

2.3 Do you think there is sufficient flexibility in the <u>procedures for strategic planning</u> and preparation of the Agency's annual Work Programme? For example, if circumstances change at a national level, can priorities and plans be easily adapted?

Yes there is sufficient flexibility ☐   No there is not enough flexibility ☐   Don't know ☐

How can the procedures be improved? Please explain below:

2.3 Are the <u>timescales</u> for preparation of the Agency's annual Work Programme appropriate, e.g. does this leave you with enough time to prepare plans at a national level?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

3.   Networking and Relationship with the Agency

3.1 How well developed are your <u>links with other FOPs</u>? Please indicate the main types of contacts (where 1 = very important and 3 = not very important):

Links with other FOPs	1	2	3
Focal Point meetings organized by the Agency			
Bilateral meetings organized by you/other Focal Points			
Use of the Extranet and other electronic/telephone communications			
Other contacts (please specify):			

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3.2 Have you developed close <u>links with particular FOPs</u>? If yes, please explain which FOP(s) these are and the purpose/benefits of the cooperation:

Yes I have links with particular FOPs ☐   No I do not have links with particular FOPs ☐

If yes, please indicate which FOPs/countries:

What is the purpose/benefits of cooperation?

3.3 Do you think the Agency provides enough <u>support to promote networking</u> between FOPs?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you have answered no, what sort of additional support would be helpful? Please explain:

3.4 What do you see as being the main <u>benefits of FOP networking</u>? Please indicate (where 1 = very important and 3 = not very important):

Benefits of FOP networking	**1**	**2**	**3**
Strengthening the FOP function (e.g. by learning from experience elsewhere)			
Sharing good practices with regard to OSH activities (e.g. Europe Week)			
Enabling tasks to be carried out more efficiently (e.g. translation checking)			
Making it easier to lobby the Agency (e.g. over Work Programme priorities)			
Other (please specify)			

3.5 Turning to <u>networking at a national/regional level</u>, how well developed is your relationship with key partners? Please indicate the strength of the various relationships (where 1 = excellent and 3 = poor):

Relationship with network partners	**1**	**2**	**3**
Social partner organisations			
National authorities			
OSH specialists and agencies			
Employer organisations			
Trade unions			
Universities and research bodies			
Others (please specify)			

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3.6 In general, do <u>network partners</u> in your country provide the support needed to successfully implement the Agency's Work Programme in your country? Please indicate (where 1 = excellent contribution and 3 = poor contribution):

Relationship with network partners	**1**	**2**	**3**
Social partner organisations			
National authorities			
OSH specialists and agencies			
Employer organisations			
Trade unions			
Universities and research bodies			
Others (please specify)			

3.7 With regard to your <u>relationship with the Agency</u>, do you receive all the support you need? Please indicate (where 1 = very good and 3 = very poor):

Relationship with the Agency	**1**	**2**	**3**
Promotional materials and tools			
Website development and content			
Preparation for Europe Week and other events			
Focal Point subsidy and other financial arrangements			
Networking and inputs to the Agency's work Programme			
Others (please specify)			

3.8   How important is the <u>Focal Point subsidy</u> to your activities?

(1) Without the Focal Point subsidy it would not be possible to carry out key activities   ☐

(2) The Focal Point subsidy is important but some activities could go ahead anyway   ☐

(3) Without the Focal Point subsidy, none of the planned activities could go ahead   ☐

3.9 Overall, how responsive and supportive to FOPs is the Agency in your view?

Very supportive/responsive ☐   Quite supportive/responsive ☐   Not responsive/supportive at all ☐

4.   Impacts and Added Value of European Dimension

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4.1   Looking at the various types of activities undertaken by the Agency and FOPs, which have the greatest and most cost-effective <u>impact in promoting improved safety and health at work</u> in your country? Please indicate (where 1 = large impact and 3 = small or no impact):

Impacts	**1**	**2**	**3**
Publications and research			
Good practice guides and other tools			
Europe Week campaigns			
Website and electronic dissemination of information			
Conferences, seminars and other events			
Networking with key partners			
Lobbying and other similar activities			
Other (please specify below)			

Others:

4.2   Which <u>target groups</u> in your country is the Agency and FOP network having the most success in reaching with the various activities? Please indicate (where 1 = large impact and 3 = small or no impact):

Target groups	**1**	**2**	**3**
National authorities			
OSH specialists and agencies			
Employer organisations			
Large companies			
Small businesses (employing less than 250 people)			
Trade unions			
Universities and research bodies			
Others (please specify below)			

Others:

4.3   Overall, do you think that <u>target groups</u> are clearly enough defined?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If no, please explain how targeting can be improved:

4.4   Overall, do you think that the Agency has developed an appropriate <u>range of activities</u>?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If no, please explain what other activities should be developed:

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4.5   Overall, how important is the <u>European dimension</u>/branding of activities to promoting improved safety and health at work at a national level?

(1) The European dimension is vital to efforts to promote improved safety and health at work   ☐

(2) The European dimension is helpful but not critical to this effort   ☐

(3) The European dimension is not critical at all to efforts to improve safety and health at work   ☐

If you have indicated (2) or (3) please explain:

Board Questionnaire

Section 1 - Current Activities and Performance

As part of the evaluation, we have carried out a number of surveys (National Focal Points, network partners and 'end users') to obtain feedback on key issues. We would appreciate your opinion on some of the questions that have been asked in the other surveys.

1.1.   Are the Agency's objectives as defined in its work programmes appropriate in relation to its mission?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you consider that the Agency's objectives should be changed, please explain:

1.2.   Which activities in your view contribute the most to achieving the Agency's objectives? Please rate all activities on a scale where 1 is the most and 3 the least.

Activities	1	2	3	Don't know
Publications and research	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Good practice guides and other tools	☐	☐	☐	☐
European Week campaigns	☐	☐	☐	☐
Healthy Workplace Initiative	☐	☐	☐	☐
Website and electronic dissemination of information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conferences, seminars and other events	☐	☐	☐	☐
Networking with key partners	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of advice to policy makers and other similar activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other activities:

1.3. **Overall, do you consider that the Agency and the National Focal Point have developed an appropriate range of activities?**

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you have answered no, please explain:

1.4. **In general, do key partners in your country provide the support needed to successfully implement the Agency's Work Programme? Please indicate (where 1 = excellent contribution and 3 = poor contribution):**

Key partners	1	2	3	Don't know
National authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
OSH specialists and agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade unions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Universities and research bodies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.5. **To what extent, in your view, have different target groups been successfully reached by the Agency's and the National Focal Point's activities? Please indicate below (where 1 = high level of reach and impact/3 = low level of reach and impact):**

Target group	1	2	3	Don't know
General public	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade unions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workplaces in SMEs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workplaces in large businesses	☐	☐	☐	☐
OSH professionals	☐	☐	☐	☐
Labour inspectors	☐	☐	☐	☐
Media and other information providers	☐	☐	☐	☐
National policy- and decision makers	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.6. **Overall, how effectively in terms of reaching its objectives does the Bilbao office of the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work carry out its functions?**

Very effectively ☐   Quite effectively ☐   Not effectively at all ☐   No opinion ☐

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1.7.   Overall, how effectively in terms of reaching their objectives do the National Focal Points and national networks carry out their functions?

Very effectively ☐   Quite effectively ☐   Not effectively at all ☐   No opinion ☐

_____

1. 8.   Overall, to what extent is the Agency, supported by National Focal Points, achieving its mission?

Completely ☐   To some extent ☐   Not at all ☐   No opinion ☐

Please explain:

1.9.   Is there anything that should be done to improve the Agency's performance?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you have answered yes, please explain:

Section 2 - Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, the evaluation suggests that there are a number of steps that could be taken to improve the way in which the Agency operates. Please give you opinion on some of these ideas.

_____

2.1   The balance between the tasks that the Agency carries out at a European level and what FOPs do at a national level may have to be adjusted. For example, more emphasis could be put on the approach adopted for the Healthy Workplace Initiative (HWI) where key tasks are organised by the Agency, through a single contractor, at an EU level. Should more tasks be carried out centrally by the Agency or more tasks on a decentralised basis by the National Focal Points?

More tasks centrally ☐   More tasks on decentralised basis ☐   Maintain current balance ☐
Don't know ☐

2.2   The current FOP subsidy system is criticised as being complicated and time-consuming to administer, and as only demonstrating partial additionality (i.e. many activities would take place anyway). Should the current FOP subsidy be replaced by other ways of supporting FOPs (and if yes, do you have any proposals)?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you have answered yes, please use this space for any comment:

2.3   It has been suggested that with EU enlargement, there is need to strengthen networking between the Agency and National Focal Points, and between FOPs themselves. Do you agree with this (and if yes, do you have any proposals how to achieve this)?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

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If you have answered yes, please use this space for any comment:

2.4   Feedback from the evaluation suggests that there is a need to get social partners more actively involved in helping to implement work programmes at a European and national level. Do you agree (and if yes, what should be done to achieve this)?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If you have answered yes, please use this space for any comments:

2.5   Is there a need for more support from the Agency/Board members to the National Focal Points to increase their visibility and strengthen their role in the national context?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

If yes, what kind of support should be provided by the Agency/the national Board members:

2.6   Should all meetings (Board, FOPs, European Week Closing Event, etc) continue to be held in Bilbao or should other venues be sometimes used (e.g. coinciding with the EU Presidency)?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

Please use this space for any additional comments or suggestions:

Network Partner Questionnaire

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2.   Please check the box (or boxes) that best describes your organisation

Company ☐   OSH specialist ☐   Trade union ☐   Employer organisation ☐   Other ☐

2.   Overall, how relevant are the activities of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) to your organisation and the needs of its members/employees?

Very relevant ☐   Quite relevant ☐   Not relevant at all ☐

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3. To what extent have different target groups in your country been reached by the Agency's activities? Please indicate (where 1 = high level of reach/3 = low level of reach).

Target group	1	2	3
General public			
Employee organisations			
Employer organisations			
Workplaces within large public companies			
Workplaces within large private companies			
Workplaces in SMEs			
OSH specialists			
Labour inspectors			
Construction industry associations			
Other			

---

4. Which activities has your organisation been involved with? Please indicate (where 1 = close involvement and 3 = no close involvement)

Activities	1	2	3	N/A
Publications and research				
Good practice guides and other tools				
Europe Week campaigns				
Website and electronic dissemination of information				
Conferences, seminars and other events				
Networking with other organisations				
Lobbying and other similar activities				
Other (please specify)				

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5. More generally, which activities have been most effective in reaching target groups and raising awareness/promoting good practice with regard to combating noise (1= very effective/3 = not effective at all)?

Activities	1	2	3	N/A
Publications and research				
Good practice guides and other tools				
European Week campaigns				
European Week Closing Event (October 2005)				
Website and electronic dissemination of information				
Conferences, seminars and other events				
Networking with national partners				
Lobbying and other similar activities				
Other (please specify)				

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6. Overall, do you think that the Agency has developed an appropriate range of activities?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

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7.   Overall, how important is the European dimension/branding of activities to promote improved safety and health at work?

(1) The European dimension is vital to efforts to promote improved safety and health at work   ☐

(2) The European dimension is helpful but not critical to this effort   ☐

(3) The European dimension is not critical at all to efforts to improve safety and health at work   ☐

If you have indicated (2) or (3) please explain:

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8.   How well developed is your relationship with the National Focal Point?

Excellent ☐   Quite good ☐   Poor ☐

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9.   In general, do key partners in your country provide the support needed to successfully implement the Agency's Work Programme in your country? Please indicate (where 1 = excellent contribution and 3 = poor contribution):

Key partners	**1**	**2**	**3**
Social partner organisations			
National authorities			
OSH specialists and agencies			
Employer organisations			
Trade unions			
Universities and research bodies			
Others (please specify)			