

Notes from Meeting of the Commission Working Group for the practical preparation of REACH (CWG) on 13 March 2006.

1. Aim of the meeting

There were two main points on the agenda, firstly to have a discussion with the MS about the setting up of the Agency and secondly, to inform about progress of the RIPs. The meeting was chaired by Yvone Slingenberg, DG ENV and Gert Dancet, DG ENTR. DG JRC, and in particular ECB, were well represented.

2. The Agency

Building: The Finish government has chosen and signed up for a building in the centre of Helsinki with total capacity of 400-500 people.

Staffing: The staff will be recruited and trained stepwise. In the beginning will the Agency be set up and run by a smaller number of Commission officials but gradually will technical (junior) staff be recruited and trained with the help of seconded experts from the MS.

Issue of concern:

- ü It seems that except from a smaller number of more experienced seconded experts from the MS, the majority of the staff that will be recruited will be junior people. The Commission was stressing the links with the MS Authorities. I asked the question whether it was possible for Industry to also second experts to ensure that there was some experience from industry. It was neither possible nor foreseen. In the margins of the meeting DG ENTR admitted the need also for industry experience in the Agency and proposed that the industry associations should offer to be involved in the training of the new staff. Industry could also encourage people to apply for temporary agents posts when the recruitment starts.
- ü There is a risk for overlap and duplications of helpdesk functions. The Agency will set up a helpdesk, so will the MS authorities and industry at European and national level. There was a common request for co-ordination and early co-operation. Cefic and UNICE is represented in the Commission's helpdesk expert group.
- ü Five MS had in writing expressed their concern about the Commission's planning of the work of the Agency and were requesting more transparency. A MS group will be set up to advice the Commission. Observers were not allowed, but the group will report to the CWG.

3 Progress of RIPs

Jack de Bruijn, ECB, gave a general overview of the status of RIP 3 and 4 subprojects, attached, and more detailed presentations were given on RIPs 3.3 (information requirements) 3.5 (DU) and 3.9 (SEA), also attached. Comments on the final report on RIP 3.5 -1 were requested by 1 May.

Jack informed about the Commission's thinking about the general structure of the full Guidance package for REACH. It will consist of a General Introduction, with concise and non-technical information. The real guidance would then be divided into guidance on processes, where clear differentiation is made for actions by different players, and on methods to be used. A web-based navigation tool will facilitate the use of the guidance.

4. PRODUCE

The final report of the strategic partnership “Piloting RECH on downstream use and communication in Europe” was presented (attached).

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