

Letter to DG Research and DG Employment on the occasion of the ending of the NEW OSH ERA project



Dear Sir, Madam,

On the occasion of the conclusion of the NEW OSH ERA, funded under the sixth Framework programme¹, PEROSH wishes to emphasise its belief in the vision of joint research efforts and resources on a European level and expresses its commitment to continue its research and development efforts in line with the strategy of the European Commission regarding a European research area and joint programming².

PEROSH Secretariat
c/o Prevent
Rue Gachard 88/4
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium

PEROSH, the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health, has been involved in the activities of the NEW OSH ERA indirectly due to an overlap of member organisations. The partnership was established in 2003 and comprises 13 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) institutes, all playing key roles in their national affiliations to governments/authorities and health insurance systems. The PEROSH member organisations employ approximately 1.000 researchers and advisors dedicated to research and development activities for a healthier, longer and more productive working life.

March 1, 2010

File no.:

Ref.:
2010/3/NR

Direct phone:
0032 2 643 44 62

e-mail:
nele.roskams@perosh.eu

Common goals

The goals of the **NEW OSH ERA** were to increase the coordination between different national research activities, to raise awareness on the importance of research on new and emerging occupational safety and health risks in the EU, and to improve the quality and effect of research in this field by creating a European network of OSH research funding organisations and by developing jointly financed research programmes.

The objectives of PEROSH are to strengthen and coordinate research and development efforts in occupational safety and health, through the pooling of resources and sharing of knowledge across institutions and countries. By doing so, PEROSH aims to improve the quality of research and increase the EU-wide dissemination of results. The uniqueness and strength of PEROSH lies in the comprehensive interdisciplinary collaboration between leading OSH research institutes in Europe.

PEROSH is convinced of the need of innovation of the OSH research and to give it a stronger European voice and visibility in order to promote the benefits for employees, enterprises and societies of healthier, longer and more productive working lives. Therefore PEROSH aims to be an active consultation partner internationally, not least in relation to the EU, where it recently has contributed to the Consultation on the future "EU 2020" Strategy³ and to the Public hearing on the safety of nanotechnologies⁴ to elaborate on the future priorities for research from an OSH and working environment point of view.

Furthermore, the partnership is ready to counsel the NEW OSH ERA funding consortium if they decide to continue their cooperation on their own premises after march 2010, the national authorities and the European Commission to broaden the transnational collaboration in Europe and to provide scientific input and advice on strategic and upcoming research areas and priorities.

Joint research of PEROSH

In recent years, it has been the strategy of PEROSH to work towards joint programming rather than to be dependent on financing from EU research programmes before starting the initiatives, which mostly - and regrettably we believe - do not acknowledge the societal benefit of OSH

¹ NEW OSH ERA, New and Emerging Risks in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) - Anticipating and dealing with change in the workplace through coordination of OSH risk research, funded by the European Commission within the 6th Framework programme for Research and Technological Development through the ERA-Net Scheme, <http://www.newoshera.eu/>.

² Brussels, 15.7.2008, COM(2008) 468 final. Towards joint programming in research: Working together to tackle common challenges more effectively.

³ PEROSH, Consultation on the future "EU 2020" Strategy, An appeal to acknowledge the impact of the working environment on the overall societal competitiveness and development in the 2020 Strategy, January 2010.

⁴ PEROSH & NEW OSH ERA, Priorities for future research in nanotoxicology, in *Submissions Scientific Hearing on Nanotechnology*, submission 26, European Commission, June 2009, p. 16, http://ec.europa.eu/health/nanohearing_en.htm

prevention research being integrated into technological development programmes. In the longer perspective, however, the majority of the PEROSH partners will need external funding from European or national agencies to be able to continue the joint European research and development.

PEROSH has identified issues of strategic significance in its member states and consequently initially established self-financed joint research projects in these fields in order to share resources and avoid duplication. This has resulted in the development of a number of high-level research projects and collaborations between the members of the partnership. At present, more than 80 researchers are actively carrying out research the 9 research projects that have been set-up within the partnership. In addition to the OSH ERA net projects the PEROSH members co-operate in the following projects, which will be carried out during the next 2 to 3 years⁵:

- Work and well being;
- Ageing of the workforce;
- Exposure measurements and risk assessment of manufactured nanoparticles;
- Hazard identification of engineered nanoparticles;
- The development of a Clearing house for systematic reviews in OSH;
- The development of a cross-culture methodology and criteria for the improvement of the EU comparative analysis;
- Workplace protection factors for respiratory devices;
- Safety culture and the promotion of a zero accident vision at the workplace;
- Workplace health intervention strategies for tackling musculoskeletal disorders.

European challenges for 2020 and beyond

The challenges that lie ahead of us are significant. In order for Europe to lead as a knowledge-based, inclusive society with a high level of social progress⁶, multilevel approaches and collaboration will become all the more essential. As PEROSH has stated in its contribution⁷ to the "EU2020" Strategy, a healthy workforce is the basis for a healthy economy. The quality of the future work and workplaces will be pivotal to ensuring a creative, healthy, competitive and productive European society and transcends the national and regional challenges.

PEROSH strongly believes that the creation of a genuine European OSH research scene can increase the effectiveness and scope of the research carried out and is necessary to cope with the challenges of future societies. For that reason, the PEROSH partners are strongly committed to continue their proactive dialogue with the EU and other international and national OSH-partners to explore paths to optimize the added value to Europe of the research, dissemination and funding efforts in our field.

We would be happy to further elaborate to the Commission on our visions concerning future priorities and initiatives for innovation through joint research and development that support the European goals for 2020.

Brussels and Copenhagen, March 2010

Yours Sincerely,



Palle Ørbæk
Chairman of PEROSH
poe@nrcwe.dk
Phone: +45 3916 520



Nele Roskams
European Coordinator of PEROSH

⁵ More information on the PEROSH collaboration and projects can be found at www.perosh.eu

⁶ Commission Working Document: Consultation on the Future "EU 2020" Strategy, Brussels, 24.11.2009 (COM (2009) 647).