

Operating framework
of the Management Board
of the European Chemicals Agency

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The Management Board's operating framework

ECHA is a decentralised European Union (EU) regulatory agency, established by the Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 ("the REACH Regulation"). Within the institutional system of the EU, agencies are created as independent "bodies" pursuant to Article 185 of the General Financial Regulation applicable to the budget of the EU¹. There is no common structure for the currently over 30 decentralised agencies. However, they all have a governing board with a broadly similar role and responsibilities. The ECHA Board can be considered as "typical" for an EU agency.

1. Role and composition of the Management Board

1.1 The Management Board as integral part of ECHA

The Management Board is an integral part of ECHA and one of the constituent components that sets out the structure of the Agency².

1.2 Mission of the Management Board

European legislation describes the powers of the Board, notably in Article 78 of the REACH Regulation. A number of specific tasks are defined in further provisions of the Regulation, such as Articles 96, 97 and 103 in relation to the Agency's budget. These and other provisions set out specific tasks and responsibilities for the Board, which are described later on in this paper in more detail.

From these responsibilities and the role as governing board it follows that the Management Board oversees ECHA's activities and policies and sets overall objectives and direction whilst ensuring good governance so that the Agency performs the role and tasks assigned to it and that the Management Board meets all its regulatory obligations

1.3 Composition of the Management Board

The Management Board has currently 35 members:

- 1 representative of each of the 27 EU Member States (with voting rights)
- 3 representatives of the European Commission (with voting rights)
- 2 independent persons appointed by the European Parliament (with voting rights)
- 3 individuals from interested parties appointed by the Commission (no voting rights)

In addition to the members, the Board decided to invite one observer from each of the three EEA-EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway)³ and, during the period preceding its accession to the EU, an observer from Croatia to attend its meetings.

There are no alternates foreseen in the REACH Regulation. Board members may, however, send a person of trust ("*personne de confiance*") to attend a meeting on their behalf⁴. This person sits in the seat of the member at the meeting and may make interventions during debates, but is not entitled to vote. With respect to the appointment in a personal capacity, replacements at plenary or sub group meetings should, however, remain an exception and not be the rule.

¹ Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002.

² See Article 76 of the REACH Regulation

³ The EEA-EFTA states take part in the REACH implementation based on EEA Joint Committee Decision 25/2008 of May 2008 on REACH and the establishment of a European Chemicals Agency

⁴ See meeting minutes of the Management Board meeting of 27-29 June 2007, page 6, and of the meeting of 4-5 March 2010, page 1.

1.4 Members of the Management Board and their role

Member State representatives are appointed by a decision of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission nominates its representatives and the non-voting members from interested parties per Commission decision. The independent persons appointed by the European Parliament are designated by the President of the European Parliament. The observers are designated by the respective national mission to the EU or by the responsible national ministry.

The duration of the term of office of Management Board members is four years and it may be renewed once. For the first mandate, the Commission had to identify half of its appointees and the Council twelve of its appointees for whom this period is six years.

The requirement of a Council decision for the appointment of Member State representatives prevents a too frequent turnover which might otherwise hinder the functioning of the Board and the continuity of its work. Replacements of Board members are, nevertheless, a reoccurring issue. The time required for adopting the appointment decisions can result in a considerable gap between the identified need for a replacement and the actual appointment. For this reason a practical arrangement has been put in place with the aim of ensuring, in particular, the continued involvement of Member States in the Board's proceeding. To this end, a Board member who has to resign from his or her function usually remains on the Board until a replacement is appointed. During the interim period the Board member can nominate a person of trust and/or delegate a proxy vote to another Board member with voting rights. The arrangement is agreed with the individual member on a case-by-case basis and communicated to the Board at the beginning of each meeting.

Role of Management Board members

As regards the structure and expertise of the Management Board, the REACH Regulation provides as follows:

"To ensure that the Agency fulfils its role, the composition of the Management Board is designed to represent each Member State, the Commission and other interested parties appointed by the Commission in order to ensure the involvement of stakeholders, and the European Parliament and to secure the highest standard of competence and a broad range of relevant expertise in chemicals safety or the regulation of chemicals, whilst ensuring that there is relevant expertise in the field of general financial and legal matters"⁵.

Hence, it appears that the intention of the legislative authority is that while individually members represent their Member State, institution or interested parties, they are appointed (either) in a personal capacity and/or because of their expertise. The primary duty of the Management Board and of its members – being part of ECHA – is to ensure good governance and that the Agency fulfils the role and tasks assigned to it. These considerations should guide the Management Board members in cases where a distinction is to be made between the interests of the Agency and the interest of individual Member States or organisations they represent.

1.5 Independence and commitment

Members of the Board make a declaration of commitment to fulfil their duties and a declaration of interests which could be prejudicial to their independence⁶.

These declarations are made annually in writing and entered in a register held by ECHA. The register is accessible to the public, on request, at the Agency's office. For transparency reasons, the declarations of interest are also published on ECHA's website. Members of the

⁵ See Recital 98 and Article 86 of the REACH Regulation

⁶ See Article 88(2) of the REACH Regulation

Management Board follow usually the invitation of the secretariat to provide a curriculum vitae or biographic abstract which is then also published on the website.

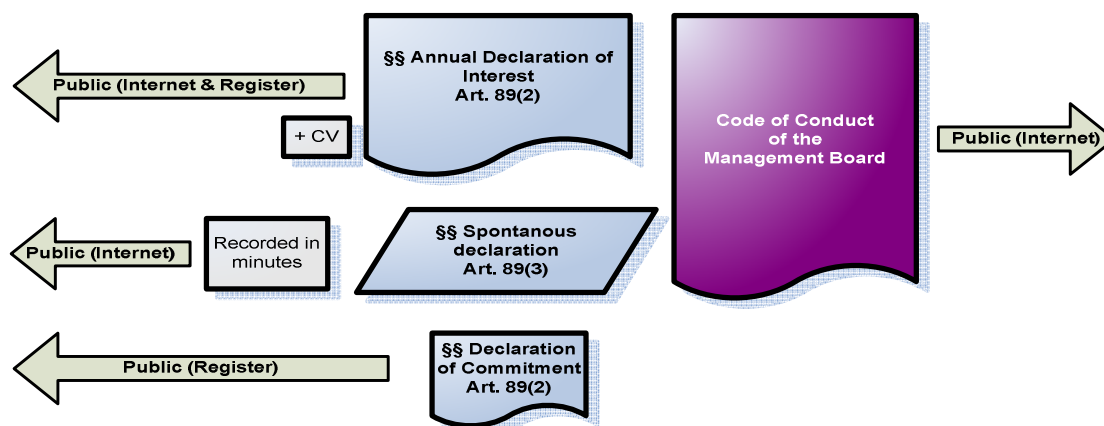
The forms for the declarations were adopted by the Board and are included in an annex to the Rules of Procedures. The members' declarations of interest are to be reviewed by the Chair. The declaration of the Chair is reviewed by the Deputy Chair.

No member shall participate at any Management Board meeting without a valid declaration in place. Moreover, at each meeting, members are required by the REACH Regulation spontaneously declare any interest which could be prejudicial to their independence with respect to any point on the agenda. Anyone declaring such interests does not participate in any voting or discussion on the respective point.

The duty to declare any relevant interest extends to the non-voting Board members appointed by the Commission to represent interested parties. This applies, however, without prejudice to their legally foreseen role as representatives of a specific interest⁷.

Observers and persons of trust are equally asked to sign a declaration of interests if no previous valid annual declaration is available in the Agency's files.

The Management Board also adopted a Code of Conduct which is signed by all members and contains for example provisions on independence, invitations and gifts⁸.



1.6 Confidentiality

The REACH Regulation requires members of the Management Board, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of the kind covered by the duty of professional secrecy⁹. Other persons present at meetings shall respect the confidential character of Board meetings and may be requested by the Secretariat to formally acknowledge this duty by signing a corresponding declaration.

The Code of Conduct of the Management Board addresses confidentiality aspects, including the requirements for persons advising Board members in the meeting preparations. Accordingly, confidentiality duties do not prevent Board members from sharing information with experts in the Member States or other persons assisting them in the preparations of the meetings. Similar to other work in the public service or private organisations, a informed judgment has to be made by each Board member as to whether a certain issue is to be treated confidential or not. The Secretariat is ready to assist in case of doubt.

⁷ The Commission appointed Members from interested parties to represent the perspectives of different stakeholders, i.e. from industry, consumers, environmental and health NGOs and trade unions

⁸ Decision of 23 March 2012, Annex to MB/12/2012 final

⁹ See Article 105 of the REACH Regulation

2. Statutory responsibilities of the Management Board

Annex 3 of this paper contains a compilation of legal provisions which refer to the Management Board and its budgetary, financial and other responsibilities. The most important tasks are summarised in this chapter. Some of the tasks, in particular those related to budgetary matters, are to be accomplished each year by a specific deadline.

2.1 REACH Regulation

The Management Board's main tasks are described in ECHA's constituent legal act, the REACH Regulation. Article 78 of the Regulation specifies the powers of the Board in general terms. Specific provisions clarify some of these in more detail.

The main tasks of the Management Board are the following:

Budgetary and financial matters

- adopt the annual budget and amendments thereof
- estimate of revenue / expenditure for the following financial year (by 31 March)
- deliver an opinion on the agency's final accounts (by 1 July)
- notify to the Budgetary Authority projects with significant financial implications, in particular in relation to building / property

Strategic planning of reporting

- adopt an annual (by 31 October) and a multiannual work programme (regularly)
- adopt an annual general report on the activities of ECHA (by 30 April)

Appointing Authority

- appoint/dismiss the Executive Director and act as disciplinary authority
- appoint the members for ECHA's scientific committees (RAC and SEAC)
- appoint the Chairman, the members and alternates of the Board of Appeal
- appoint the accounting officer of ECHA and control his / her work

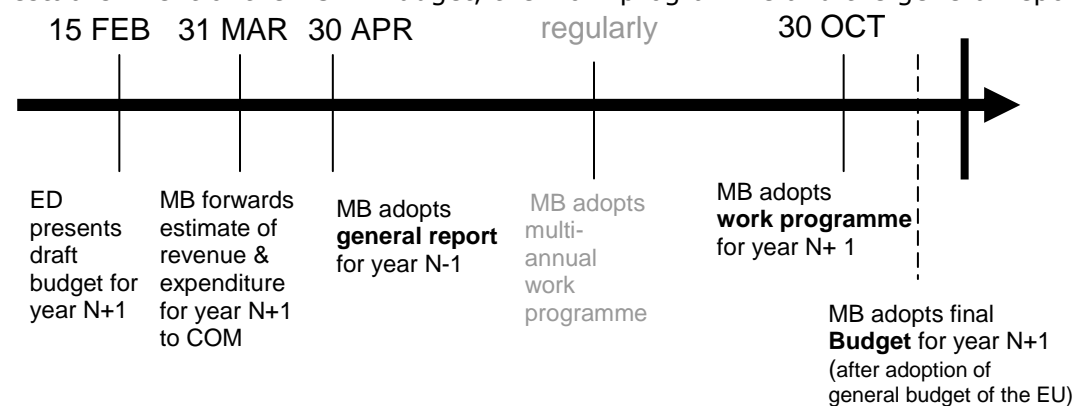
Setting of internal rules

- adopt its own rules of procedure and rules of procedures of the Agency bodies (MSC, RAC, SEAC, Forum)
- adopt the Implementing Rules for the Staff Regulations
- adopt the practical arrangements for implementing Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to documents
- adopt financial rules applicable to ECHA, including rules for reimbursement,
- adopt rules for remunerating alternates of the Board of Appeal and other experts working with ECHA
- adopt in agreement with the Commission rules on transparency regarding the safety of substances
- adopt rules of procedures to coordinate work between ECHA and other EU bodies or scientific committees
- setting other rules and procedures within the remit of the Management Board

Contacts with external parties

- decide on the participation of third countries / international organisations in ECHA's work
- develop contacts with stakeholder organisations (in agreement with the Commission)

Example of a key task: A key responsibility of the Management Board is the establishment of the budget and the work programme, the latter being the financing decision for the budget, justifying the use of resources. The Board has also the duty to monitor the budget and work programme implementation. The graphic below shows the timeline for the establishment of the ECHA Budget, the work programme and the general report.



The adoption of these documents is integrated into the Agency-wide planning cycle and determines further planning activities at directorate and unit level. The planning cycle describes the timing and practical arrangements for the planning of the work of the Agency and its organisational entities¹⁰.

2.2 REACH Fee Regulation

The Agency is partly financed by fees paid by industry. A smaller amount of revenue is also generated from administrative charges. Part of the fee revenue is used to reimburse Member States for tasks performed under the REACH Regulation.

Certain specific Management Board tasks related to the fee management are set out in the REACH Fee Regulation (EC) No 340/2008, which is a Commission implementing act for the REACH Regulation. Management Board decisions under the Fee Regulation require a favourable opinion of the Commission before they can be applied.

Examples of tasks from the Fee Regulation include:

- set the amount for the reimbursement of Member State tasks under substance evaluation, restriction or authorisation procedures and the maximum proportion of the fees and charges transferred to the Competent Authorities of the Member States as well as any arrangement necessary for the transfer
- set of a classification of administrative and technical services provided by the Agency and the charges levied for these services

2.3 ECHA Financial Regulation

Important duties of the Board are contained in ECHA's Financial Regulation (MB/58/2008 final) which was adopted by the Management Board on the basis of a Commission framework financial regulation for the EU bodies, such as agencies¹¹.

¹⁰ See MB/52/2009 final

¹¹ See Article 99 of the REACH Regulation. The Financial Regulation is contained in Regulation (EC) No 1605/2002 and states that EU bodies, such as agencies, must adopt financial regulations based on a framework financial regulation adopted by the Commission. The framework financial regulation is contained in Commission Regulation (EC) No 2343/2002. The Management Board has adopted the ECHA Financial Regulation (MB/58/2008 final) in agreement with the Commission. ECHA's Regulation follows very closely the Commission's framework, with the exception, for example, of a provision allowing joint procurements with the Finnish State procurement agency.

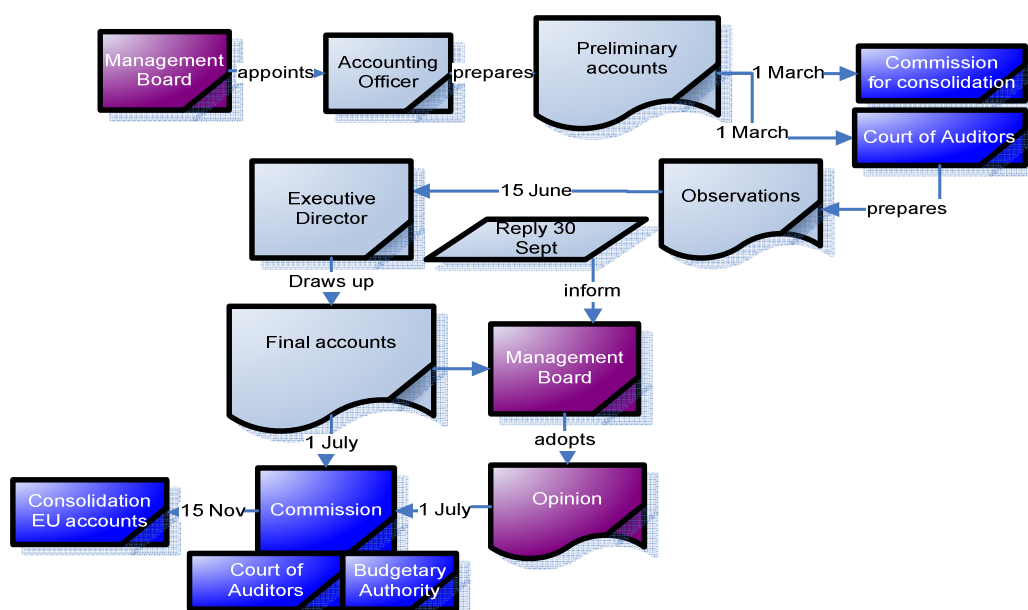
The provisions in the Financial Regulation repeat partly the Board's budgetary and financial obligations contained in the REACH Regulation and may specify these in more detail. There are also a number of additional responsibilities of the Board contained in the ECHA Financial Regulation:

Main additional tasks are the following:

- decide on the carry over of budget appropriations
- be informed by the Executive Director of significant budget transfers and decide on significant transfers within the budget
- adopt a multi-annual staff policy plan (by 31 March)
- adopt (limited) changes to the establishment plan
- deliver an analysis and assessment of the annual activity report of the Executive Director as authorising officer under the Financial Regulation (by 15 June)
- receive results of ex ante and ex post evaluations of programmes or activities which entail significant expenditure
- receive information on achievement of objectives and sound financial management
- receive information on the observations by the European Parliament accompanying the discharge decision
- act as competent authority for conflicts of interest of the Executive Director in his or her role as financial actor under the Financial Regulation
- decide on whether to accept any legacies, donations or grants from other EU sources or any voluntary contribution from the Member States or from their regulatory authorities

Example of a key task: The graphic below explains the procedure for establishing the accounts and the Management Board's role in this. ECHA's accounts as EU Agency are consolidated with the accounts of the Commission and other EU bodies. The objective of this is to present the European Union and their controlled entities as if they were one single entity. This consolidation takes place in two phases:

1. Consolidation of the provisional accounts including the accounts of EU agencies
2. After the observations of the Court of Auditors: consolidation of the final accounts



2.4 Rules of Procedure of the Board of Appeal

The Rules of Procedures of the Board of Appeal are laid down in form of another Commission implementing act for the REACH Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 771/2008).

The following Management Board tasks are included in this Regulation:

- adopt rules for calculation of the amounts and advances to be paid to witnesses
- agree to detailed rules established by the Board of Appeal regarding these payments

2.5 CLP, Biocides and PIC Regulations

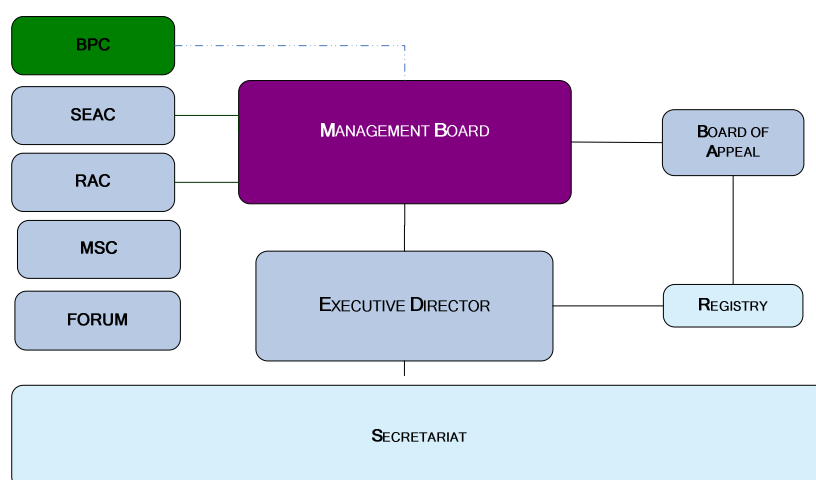
After the adoption of the REACH Regulation, the mandate of the Agency was supplemented by the CLP Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008. The CLP tasks were included into the existing Agency structure and, consequently, there are no specific provisions related to the Management Board. The Board assumes its statutory role in this field in the same way as under the REACH mandate (e.g. planning and reporting, financial matters).

To a large extent, this will apply in the same way for the inclusion of new tasks under the Biocides and PIC Regulations. The Biocides Regulation foresees as additional responsibility of the Management Board to decide, in agreement with the Commission, whether the Biocidal Products Committee shall be divided into two or more parallel committees.

There will be fees levied under the Biocides Regulation and, similar to REACH, the Management Board may be assigned specific responsibilities in a future Biocides Fee Regulation which will be adopted by the Commission.

3. The Management Board within the Agency structure

The Management Board has a dedicated role within the Agency structure and formal links with other actors and bodies of ECHA (i.e. the Executive Director, the Committees, the Forum, the Secretariat and the Board of Appeal). The legislation foresees a clear separation of their respective roles and functions.



3.1 The Management Board and the Executive Director

The main duties and powers of the Executive Director are listed in Article 83 of the REACH Regulation. It is stipulated there, *inter alia*, that the Agency shall be “managed by its Executive Director” who shall perform his duties in the interest of the Union, and independently of any specific interest. The legislation determines that the Executive Director shall be the “legal representative” and responsible for the “day-to-day administration” as well as “managing all Agency resources necessary for carrying out its tasks”, including “all staff matters”¹².

The Management Board’s supervisory role vis-à-vis the Executive Director is reflected in the fact that it has general responsibility for budgetary matters, the appointment and dismissal of the Executive Director and the monitoring of the implementation of the work programme and the Agency’s performance¹³. The separation of tasks shall avoid overlapping between the two actors, and allow the Management Board to focus on setting strategic priorities and on the adoption of annual and multi-annual management plans as well as verification of the implementation.

Whilst the responsibilities of the governing board and the executive of the Agency are thus clearly separated, the Management Board is provided on a regular basis with detailed information from the day-to-day management of the Agency so that the Board is effectively in the position to perform its role and also to advise and counsel the ECHA management.

As appointing authority, the Management Board is responsible for the annual appraisal of the Executive Director. The procedure follows a model provided by the European Commission¹⁴. Accordingly, the Board has appointed three reporting officers for the Executive Director who perform the duties allocated to reporting officers under the Staff Regulations. The objective is to assess the efficiency, the competencies/abilities and the conduct in the service of the jobholder.

3.2 The Management Board and the Committees and the Forum

The Committees are responsible for preparing opinions of the Agency under its operational mandate and to resolve potential divergences of opinions on draft decisions proposed by the Agency. The Forum coordinates a network of Member State authorities responsible for enforcement of the REACH and CLP provisions.

The Management Board has a limited supervisory role concerning the Committees and the Forum¹⁵. This is shown by the fact that the Board approves or adopts the Rules of Procedures of these other Agency bodies. . The Board also appoints the Members of the Risk Assessment Committee and the Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis. The Chairpersons of the Committees and the Forum may attend the Management Board meetings without voting rights¹⁶

Members of the Management Board may not be members of ECHA’s Committees or Forum¹⁷. This underlines that the Management Board has no role concerning the scientific work of the

¹² See Article 83 of the REACH Regulation

¹³ Another example of the Board’s supervisory role is the analysis and assessment it carries out each year on the Executive Director’s annual activity report as authorising officer under the Financial Regulation. This in turn is made part of the discharge given to the Executive Director by the European Parliament for the execution of the budget.

¹⁴ Adopted as implementing act for the EU Staff Regulations by the Management Board and in agreement with the Commission (MB/44/2009 final)

¹⁵ The Management Board has no role in relation to the (scientific) outputs of the Committees and the Forum or the decision and opinion proceedings

¹⁶ See Article 81(3) of the REACH Regulation

¹⁷ See Articles 85 and 86 of the REACH Regulation. The Management Board concluded in September 2012 that this should, as a rule, apply by analogy to permanent observers in Committees, i.e. Board members should not sit as observers in Committees on a permanent basis in order to separate the operational discussion from the Board’s governance function.

Committees or the enforcement coordination activities and that its supervisory and appointment function should not be compromised by incompatible double functions.

Conversely to the members of the RAC and SEAC, the Committee Chairs are not appointed by the Management Board. The REACH Regulation provides that the Chairs are staff of the Secretariat and, hence, under the leadership of the Executive Director. There are no specific links between the Management Board and the Chairpersons apart from the fact that they are entitled to attend Management Board meetings.

3.3 The Management Board and the Secretariat

The Agency's Secretariat works under the leadership of the Executive Director and provides technical, scientific and administrative support to the Committees and the Forum and ensures coordination between them. It also undertakes the work required under the procedures for pre-registration, registration and evaluation and other relevant operations as well as preparation of guidance, database maintenance and information provision. Furthermore, the Executive Director provides a secretariat for the Management Board with the support of resources from the Secretariat¹⁸.

Members of the ECHA Secretariat are subject to the rules and regulations applicable to officials and other servants of the European Union (Staff Regulations). As appointing authority, the Executive Director is in charge of all staff matters. The Management Board is responsible for setting the overall framework, i.e. by adopting the implementing rules for the Staff Regulations which determine the practical application of the rules in the Agency¹⁹. The Management Board also adopted a Code of Good Administrative Behaviour which applies to all staff²⁰. On request, an observer of the ECHA Staff Committee is admitted to be present at Board meetings – as representatives of the Executive Director- when decisions are discussed on which the Staff Committee was before consulted by the ECHA management.

The Management Board has a special relation to the Agency's accounting officer who is appointed in the specific function by the Board²¹ but otherwise covered by the EU Staff Regulations and employed as regular temporary agent of the Agency²². The accounting officer is invited to attend Board meetings for relevant matters, in particular the presentation of the annual accounts for the Board's opinion.

Furthermore, the Board approved the framework under which ECHA's Internal Audit Capability provides independent advice to the Executive Director²³. ECHA decided to have an own local Audit Capability (IAC) in addition to the regular internal auditor which is the Commission's Internal Audit Service for all agencies²⁴. Hence, the IAC constitutes voluntary "second layer" in the Agency's audit governance. The decision to have an IAC in an Agency results from considerations on, *inter alia*, the size and the risk profile. The added value of the IAC function resides in its permanent resource capacity, which enables it to develop a deep knowledge of the Agency's activities, operations and related business risks, and to react promptly to management's requests for assurance and consulting. IAS and IAC are therefore complementary in providing assurance to the Executive Director. While the IAC operates solely under the Executive Director's authority, he or she prepares on an annual basis, in liaison with the Executive Director, a report for the attention of ECHA's Management Board summarising the IAC's activities and the main audit results.

The Management Board is regularly informed of important appointments and of open

¹⁸ See Article 76(1)(g) and 83(2)(h) of the REACH Regulation

¹⁹ See Article 103 of the REACH Regulation. The rules are to be adopted in agreement with the Commission

²⁰ See MB/11/2008 final

²¹ See Article 83 of the REACH Regulation and corresponding provisions in the ECHA Financial Regulation

²² See Article 43 of the ECHA Financial Regulation (MB/53/2008)

²³ See Mission Charter of the Internal Audit Capability as approved by the Management Board (MB/80/2008 final)

²⁴ See Article 71(2) of ECHA Financial Regulation and Article 185 of the EU General Financial Regulation

positions in the Secretariat. The ECHA Directors attend all Board meetings. There are regular occasions provided for informal meetings with staff members and Management Board members.

3.4 The Management Board and the Board of Appeal

The Board of Appeal decides on appeals against certain decisions taken by the Agency. The Management Board defines the structure of the Board of Appeal and appoints the Chairman, the regular members and their alternates²⁵. In line with the legislation, the Management Board also appointed additional members and their alternates. The Management Board also endorsed a Code of Conduct for the members and alternates of the Board of Appeal²⁶.

The Members of the Board of Appeal are appointed in a similar procedure as the Executive Director. The REACH Regulation does, however, not require that the Board of Appeal has a permanent structure (i.e. that the Chairperson and the two regular members are employed on as staff members of the Agency). This was decided by the Management Board in 2007 for the first five years on the basis of the anticipated number of appeals and considerations related to the status of the Board of Appeal²⁷.

The Chairman of the Board of Appeal and the two regular members are thus employed as temporary agents of the Agency. This allows ECHA to implement the Board's decision and provide a permanent appeal structure. The members of the Board of Appeal are, however, independent and not bound to any instructions from the Executive Director. Alternate and additional members are not employed as Agency staff and called for support on an *ad hoc* basis.

The Executive Director provides a Registry which assists the Board of Appeal in the exercise of its duties and is responsible for all documents and correspondence related to appeal proceedings.

It is established practice that the Management Board receives annual reports from the Chairman of the Board of Appeal, and he or she, as the other members, are then also invited to attend the Management Board meetings for an exchange of views.

As for the Executive Director, the Management Board is responsible for the annual appraisal procedure of the members of the Board of Appeal²⁸. The three reporting officers form also a working group dealing with general matters related to the Board of Appeal.

4. The Management Board and the European Commission

The Commission assumes a supervisory role in relation to regulatory agencies, such as ECHA insofar as this is foreseen in the relevant Regulations.

The legislative framework for this is mainly

- The provisions of the REACH Regulation as ECHA's founding legal act;
- Art. 185 of the EU General Financial Regulation
- The ECHA Financial Regulation (MB/53/2008 final) which was adopted on the basis of a Commission framework Regulation for the decentralised regulatory agencies.²⁹

As regards the Management Board, the Commission plays a role through its representation on the Board, proposing lists of candidates for the appointment of the Executive Director

²⁵ See MB/22/2008 final

²⁶ See MB/33/2010 final

²⁷ See MB/17/2007 final

²⁸ See MB/44/2009 final

²⁹ OJ L 357, 21.12.2002

and the Board of Appeal, its implication in the budget procedure and in the audit via the Internal Audit Service³⁰. The Commission has also a specific role through its agreement to ECHA's implementing rules under the Staff Regulations and the Fee Regulation.

5. The Management Board and the MSCA's

The national Competent Authorities established under the REACH and CLP Regulations (MSCAs) execute the functions concerning the practical implementation as defined in the legislation. There are no overlaps with the responsibilities and the supervisory role of the Management Board.

In a broader perspective, appointing members to the governing board of an agency is, however, usually seen as a means to build a structured and fruitful relationship between the various actors involved, in particular the agency, the Member States and the Union's institutions. This means that the Management Board has a role in facilitating a smooth cooperation between national authorities and ECHA. Also, in practice there is indeed a need for coordination and information exchange and in a limited number of cases the same individuals are involved the Management Board and the ECHA related activities in the MSCAs. Nevertheless, there is a clear separation foreseen between the oversight function of the Management Board and the tasks of the Competent Authorities.

There also should be no overlaps between the role of the Management Board, which is clearly defined in the legislation as set out above, and the role of the CARACAL meeting which is an advisory body set-up by the Commission to assist the Commission and ECHA on questions related to REACH and CLP³¹. CARACAL advises the Commission, in the preparation of legislation or in policy definition coordinates with Member States and monitors the development of national policies and the enforcement of EU legislation by national authorities.

In 2007, the Management Board discussed whether an own ECHA body should be established for MSCA coordination but agreed that the CARACAL meeting (formerly REACH-CA) should be used as a forum for discussions between the Agency and the Member States on regulatory issues³². The meetings are since co-chaired by the Commission and ECHA. ECHA is primarily using the CARACAL meetings to consult with the MSCAs (and stakeholders) on issues where it is important that the views on implementation of the legislation are aligned, and thus that the regulatory processes and the individual cases (such as evaluation decisions, or Annex XV dossiers) can be processed, to the extent possible, without principal disagreements. Furthermore, ECHA informs the MSCAs and stakeholders on the progress with REACH and CLP implementation, e.g. where they can act as multipliers of that information at national/sector level.

Since 2011, ECHA convenes annual planning meetings with national competent authorities which aim to coordinate more closely the joint work planning. The outcome of the meeting feeds into the Executive Director's proposal for the annual and multi-annual work programme that are then submitted to the Management Board but there is also no overlap between the Management Board's role and the MSCA meetings.

³⁰ Art. 185 par. 330 of the EU Financial Regulation stipulates that the Commission is responsible for exercising the powers concerning internal audit towards the agencies.

³¹ Formerly a certain link existed between CARACAL and Management Board proceedings in the context of the update of REACH and CLP Guidance documents. This was, however, abolished by the Board in March 2011. See minutes of the Management Board MB/01/2011 pages 12/13.

³² MB/29/2007 "Reinforced cooperation with the Member States Competent Authorities"

6. Working practices of the Management Board

This chapter describes the working practices currently applied by the Management Board.

6.1 Management Board Chair and Deputy-Chair

In accordance with Article 80 of the REACH Regulation, the Management Board selects a Chair and a Deputy Chair from its members with voting rights for a term of office of two years, renewable once.

The Regulation does not provide further guidance on the role of the Chair or the Deputy Chair apart from the deputising function. The primary role of the Chair is to preside over the plenary meetings and to make sure that the Board arrives at timely and consistent decisions or workable conclusions. The Chair also observes that the different points on the agenda are dealt with in the time allocated for the meetings.

The Rules of Procedure of the Management Board describe how the Chair cooperates with the Executive Director in the setting of the agenda for Management Board meetings or the conduct of written procedures. The Chair also signs decisions and formal notifications on behalf of the Management Board as well as the employment contract between the Agency and the Executive Director and he or she has a mediating role in the annual appraisal procedure for the Executive Director and the members of the Board of Appeal.

The Chair is usually charged with the implementation of Board decisions, including the required communication with external parties. He or she also responds to direct correspondence related to the Management Board and its proceedings. Furthermore, the Chair authorises the draft minutes and Preliminary Conclusions of Board meetings before they are sent to the other members.

More than these formalities, the role of the Chair is to provide an element of leadership for the Management Board and of close cooperation with the Executive Director. Therefore, the Chair is informed by the Executive Director of important developments and asked for counsel as needed. The Chair is also the face of the Management Board towards the staff of the Secretariat and invited to important external and internal Agency events. Furthermore, the Chair is contact point for the Agency's institutional partners, for example for the submission of audit reports from the Court of Auditors or the Commission's internal audit service or any other correspondence from the European institutions, Member States or third country authorities.

The Chair may ask the Deputy-Chair for support, in particular to represent the Board on his or her behalf in official meetings or events.

The Chair is supported in these tasks by the Secretariat of the Management Board which is, in accordance with the REACH Regulation, provided by the Executive Director. The Secretariat provides briefings and advice to the Chair in between Board meetings and in the preparatory phase of the meetings. Before each plenary meeting, the Chair is equipped with background information on all items on the agenda and the requested decisions. The draft documentation for meetings is sent to the Chair for commenting shortly before submission to the full Board. Furthermore, a functional e-mail address is managed by the Secretariat in liaison with the Chair to facilitate the management of the Board's correspondence. Letters related to the Management Board are received and sent through this functional e-mailbox. The Secretariat is also entitled to open postal mail received for the Chair by the Agency. The Secretariat thereby keeps record of the Chair's correspondence and other Management Board related activities and provides support in drafting of replies etc.

6.2 Management Board meetings

Meetings of the Management Board are convened four times per year and take place at the Agency's premises in Helsinki. Since the REACH Regulation does not provide for a sort of Bureau which could take certain administrative decisions on behalf of the Board, these quarterly meetings of the Board are necessary for fulfilling all legal and governance obligations stemming from the REACH Regulation and other applicable legislation.

Decisions taken at meetings of the Management Board are often prepared by subgroups (see below 6.5). The Management Board Rules of Procedure also foresee the possibility to convene extraordinary meetings to deal with urgent business but this provision had thus far not to be applied.

According to a Management Board conclusion of June 2009, one Management Board meeting per calendar year can take place outside Helsinki on invitation by a Member State representative. The practical arrangements are in this case organised in close cooperation with the hosting country and the agenda features exchanges of views with representatives of the national government and authorities from the field of ECHA's activities. The host country has to cover the costs related to the meeting facilities and an eventual social programme. In principle, there should be no additional costs to ECHA caused by external meetings and the meeting venue should be reasonably convenient to reach from European capitals.

Meetings of the Management Board are not open to the public. The REACH Regulation defines the circle of persons entitled or requested to attend. The Executive Director always takes part in the meetings but without voting rights. The Chairs of the Committees and the Forum may participate, also without voting rights³³. ECHA's Directors regularly attend the meetings. ECHA staff members participate on request by the Executive Director. Board members are occasionally accompanied by advisors from their administration.

6.3 Agenda setting and meeting documentation

a) agenda setting

The draft agenda for Management Board meetings is established by the Executive Director in liaison with the Chair. It is adopted at the beginning of each meeting. The structure is generally as follows:



The meeting documents are mostly prepared under the responsibility of the Executive Director, unless they are, for example, submitted as proposals from a Management Board

³³ See Article 81 of the REACH Regulation

sub-group or from the Board of Appeal. Documents are usually presented for the following actions³⁴:

<i>For adoption / approval</i>	These relate to a formal decision that is required directly or indirectly by legislation. The decisions are recorded in the minutes as being adopted by the Board. The minutes are signed by the Chair after approval and, where appropriate, the Secretariat keeps additional documentation signed by the Chair for individual decisions.
<i>For endorsement</i>	These usually relate to a decision or policy initiative of strategic nature that falls within the remit of the Executive Director, for which he or she is seeking the support of the Management Board. Endorsement commits the Board and engages a degree of responsibility for the matter. These are recorded in the minutes as being endorsed by the Management Board.
<i>For information</i>	These are agenda items for topics on which the Management should or would like to be informed because of the strategic relevance. They can take the form of an oral report, presentation or document. Information items are also used to seek orientation from the Board in specific issues. The minutes record the submission of the information to the Board as well as any directions arising from Board discussions or specific issues raised by the Board.

Occasionally a document may also be submitted "for discussion" or "for guidance" in order to emphasise that a strategic orientation from the Board is sought.

At the first meeting of each year, the secretariat of the Management Board presents an updated Rolling Plan to the Management Board which provides an indicative forward planning of the meetings and the items on the agenda for the years N, N+1 and N+2.

b) meeting documentation

The meeting documentation is prepared under the responsibility of the Executive Director. Exceptions from this rule are the regular report from the Chairman of the Board of Appeal or outcome reports from selection procedures for Board of Appeal positions.

Meeting documents should be concise and focus on the relevant aspects as far as possible. They should explain the purpose and the reasoning and set out the requested action without confronting Board members with an inappropriate level of detail. More extensive explanations or other background material should be provided as an annex, if needed.

In accordance with the Board's Rules of Procedure, the relevant documentation for agenda items subject to decision making is to be submitted to the Board at least ten calendar days before each meeting. In practice, most meeting documents are submitted jointly to the Board ten calendar days before the meeting electronically via a "CIRCA group"³⁵. In accordance with a Management Board decision of September 2012, the Secretariat strives, however, to make part of the documents available two weeks before the meeting. In case of an extraordinary meeting, the timelines related to submission of documents to Board members may be shortened.

³⁴ Management Board documents are numbered according to the following scheme: The first document submitted during a calendar year has as reference MB/01/[yyyy] and further documents bear consequential numbers. In the same way, the first written procedure during a calendar year has as reference MB/WP/01/[yyyy]. Formal communications to the Management Board in between meetings are submitted as MB/COM/nn/[yyyy]. After the Management Board's action on a document, a final version is prepared carrying the date of the respective meeting. Should a separate formal decision be issued on the basis of a document it features usually the same reference with the postfix (D) for being distinguishable but still connectable to the corresponding meeting document.

³⁵ CIRCA is a internet based document sharing and information exchange solution operated by the European Commission (<https://circabc.europa.eu/>). The Secretariat of the Management Board manages the access rights for Board members.

6.4 Decision making

a) General

The decision making of the Management Board is defined in Article 82 of the REACH Regulation and in the Board's Rules of Procedures³⁶.

Normally, the Board takes its decisions at the plenary meetings. All decisions of the Management Board are adopted by a two-thirds majority of all voting members. The quorum necessary for the meeting to be valid is achieved when at least two thirds of all voting members (22) are present or represented by a proxy.

Each voting member may cast a maximum of two proxy votes in addition to his/her own vote. The proxy must be notified to the Chair in writing and at the latest at the beginning of the meeting and are recorded in the minutes. Votes take place by a showing of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested by at least one-third of the members.

The Board has developed the practice to take decisions by consensus, unless a vote is explicitly requested. When appointing members of the Board of Appeal or the Executive Director or the Chair, a secret ballot is used. In this case, Board members without voting rights are appointed as tellers.

b) Written procedures

Between two Board meetings, urgent business may be submitted to the Board by written procedure. A written procedure is initiated by the Chairman in consultation with the Executive Director and concerns usually matters already addressed during previous meetings. Written procedures are also used if a meeting cannot be convened due to force majeure. A full report on the outcome is made at the latest at the following plenary meeting

The Management Board has established the practice that active responses are required by Board members to be counted as positive or negative vote. It is not taken into account if a Board member does not react to a written procedure (i.e. no tacit consent).

c) Procedures requiring prior European Commission consent

Certain decisions, such as implementing rules of the Staff, Fee or Financial Regulations, require a formal agreement of the European Commission before they can be formally adopted by the Board. It is not sufficient for this purpose that the Commission representatives in the Board agree to a proposal. The draft decision, once adopted, is forwarded by the Secretariat to the Commission and the institution then takes then a formal decision of which ECHA is then notified.

Upon receipt of the Commission's agreement, the Chair can formalise the Board decision. Should the Commission propose amendments or take a decision which is not fully in line with the Management Board draft decision, the matter has to be referred again to the Board. However, the Chair has the discretion to accept minor technical or linguistic changes proposed by the Commission, provided that these do not alter the content of the Board's decision³⁷.

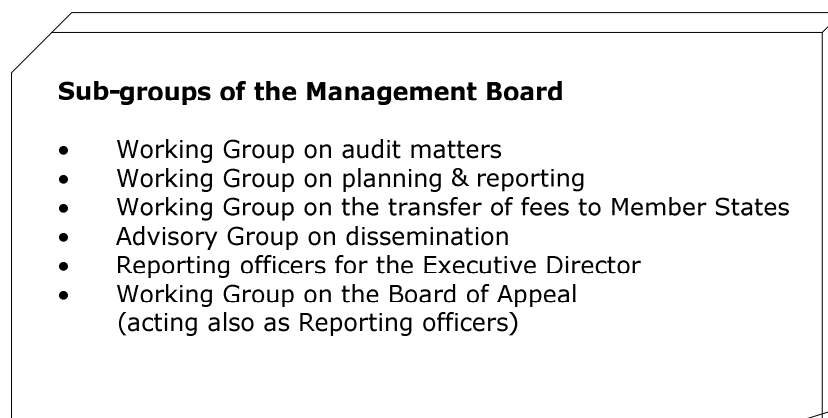
³⁶ See MB/51/2012 final

³⁷ See MB Decision MB/06/2009(D) of 26 February 2009

6.5 Management Board working groups (sub-groups)

To facilitate the preparation of the decisions a number of Management Board sub-groups were created since 2007. The sub-groups assist with planning and reporting, validate documents submitted for later decisions by the Management Board, advise the Executive Director if requests on strategic policy decisions, or monitor specific areas of the Agency's activities.

By 2012, the following groups had been established:



The groups include between three and seven members of the Board appointed by the Board at regular meetings. An updated list of all subgroups and their composition is available on the Management Board CIRCA webpages. Commission representatives are participating in all groups. Replacement is possible under the same conditions as for Board meetings if a member is unable to attend. They hold meetings in Helsinki or virtual meetings and convene regularly back-to-back to plenary meetings.

It is possible for members to send a replacement on their behalf to subgroup meetings in exceptional cases (see above 1.3). As a rule, Board members not participating in a specific subgroup may request from the Secretariat document sent the participants³⁸.

6.6 Minutes and Preliminary Conclusions

a) Minutes

Minutes record the proceedings, decisions and conclusions of the Board meetings. More specifically, the minutes of each meeting indicate

- documents submitted to the Management Board;
- a summary record of the proceedings;
- the decision taken or the conclusions reached by the Board; and
- the list of attendees.
- a list of agreed follow-up actions

The minutes strive to be clear and concise. Viewpoints voiced are grouped together by summarising the main arguments raised. The origin of the statements is only mentioned where this is necessary for the understanding of the point made, this means that in general Members are not named and specific opinions not attributed to individual persons. Minority positions and formal reserves can nevertheless be recorded in the minutes at the request of

³⁸ Exceptions may apply, in particular for restricted documents submitted to the working group on audit matters.

a Board member or the Chair³⁹.

The minutes are finalised and approved at the following Board meeting. Agreed amendments are documented in a corrigendum, which is attached to the minutes of the latter meeting. Minutes are signed by the Chair after the approval and then published on the ECHA website.

b) Preliminary Conclusions

The Preliminary Conclusions report the main results of a meeting. They are usually prepared by the secretariat of the Management Board within one working day after the meeting and then validated by the Executive Director and the Chair.

An internal version of the Preliminary Conclusions is sent within normally two working days to the Management Board. Elements which contain non-public information are marked by means of square brackets. Board members are invited to review the document within two further working days and inform the Secretariat if there are any other elements which are not to be considered public. Based on the feedback, a public version of the document is produced in liaison with the Chair and made available on the ECHA website.

The preliminary conclusions do not constitute official records of the meetings. The formal minutes which are approved by the Management Board remain the only authoritative source for the documentation of the Management Board proceedings. The purpose of the preliminary conclusions is mainly to enhance transparency and to provide a service to members.

6.7 Publication of documents

Relevant Management Board documents, including agenda and approved minutes, are published after the meetings on the ECHA webpage. A public version of the Preliminary Conclusions is made available on the webpage shortly after each plenary meeting.

Documents submitted to the Management Board are classified as internal unless it is explicitly stated otherwise on the document (public, restricted to confidential). Since 2012 the Management Board documents indicate whether they are foreseen for publication. The Board agrees or disagrees with that as part of the action for that document. As a rule, the documents submitted to the Management Board are available in the final version on the internet.

The decision not to proactively publish a document does not affect the accessibility of that document under the Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on access to document, under which disclosure may be required in response to individual requests. All Management Board documents are subject to the disclosure requirements of the Regulation and can only be withheld from public access in accordance with the exceptions given in the Regulation.

As outlined above, the Board agreed that the annual declarations of interest of members are published on the internet. For ECHA publications, the Secretariat may also take pictures during meetings or ECHA events without requesting explicit prior authorisation from Board members or other meeting attendees.

6.8 Media relations

The Management Board's Code of Conduct addresses issues related to media contacts of Board members.

³⁹ See MB/01/2008 final

After approval by the Chair, the Secretariat occasionally issues press releases. The Chair may also be interviewed by media representatives. The public version of the Preliminary Conclusions is, however, the main tool for providing information also to specialised media services.

6.9 Data protection

The European data protection rules apply to Management Board members and their contact details and other information are processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001. This means, for example, that contact details of former members are kept by the Secretariat only as long as this is needed for the operation of the Board.

6.10 Reimbursement

Governing board members are not remunerated by ECHA, but by their administration (or body) of origin. As usual in agencies, ECHA covers the travel costs and pays a daily subsistence allowance⁴⁰. ECHA reimburses the Board members their travel and accommodation expenses according to the Agency's Guide for reimbursement and pays them a daily subsistence allowance. This is to cover the participants the cost of travel from their usual place of employment to the venue of the ECHA meeting⁴¹. The participants are asked to arrange their travel in the most economic way possible in terms of time and money. ECHA is offering a convenient internet-based support service for this through a contracted travel agency.

Persons of trust attending on behalf of a Board member are entitled to reimbursement. The same applies for persons invited on the basis of the Board's Rules of Procedure or the Chair of the Forum if he or she intends to make use of the right to attend Board meetings.

⁴⁰ The Commission representatives and at least one Member State representative do not request reimbursement

⁴¹ See MB/59/2009 final