

# Safety at work: protection of workers against exposure to carcinogens agents

1995/0229(SYN) - 02/12/1996 - Council position

In its common position on the Council Directive amending Directive 90/394/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work, the Council takes into account a limited number of amendments made by Parliament at first reading. The amendments accepted seek to: - stress the presence of carcinogens at work; - take over, in part only, the definition given by Parliament to the limit value for occupational exposure (limit value for the concentration of a carcinogen in the breathing zone of a worker over an 8 hour reference period). However, the Council did not take over any of the amendments approved by Parliament and taken up by the Commission in its modified proposal with regard to: - the definition of a worker's breathing zone, - the definition of a biological limit value, - the setting of a uniform method for measurement and analysis of benzene (standard CEN 689:1995), - ensuring that this directive is consistent with those on the protection of health and general environment of citizens, - the principle of biological monitoring of exposed workers. The Council also adds new items to the text of the Commission proposals. These modifications include: - the addition of a new paragraph to specify the methods for applying this directive to asbestos and vinyl chloride monomer, which is the subject of specific directives; - clarification of the definition of the occupational limit value for exposure to carcinogens by introducing a new paragraph covering the binding nature of these limit values: it is essential to ensure that these values are never exceeded. At the same time the Council accepts the exposure limit value for benzene proposed by the Commission (1 ppm over an 8 hour reference period) but has extended the time-scale and the scope of the transitional measures for the implementation of this value so that all the sector concerned can comply with it. It sets the date by which these transitional measures should end at three years after the date of transposition of the directive by the Member States. Thus the derogations provided for by the Commission to allow certain sectors to adapt to the directive have been deleted (filling stations, garages, primary synthesis in perfume production, etc.).