

Occupational safety and health: risks related to chemical agents (14th particular Directive, Directive 89/391/EEC)

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While regretting that it had taken four years to protect workers against the risks posed by chemical agents, the rapporteur was pleased that the directive clearly laid down the commitments incumbent upon employers and established procedures for Community initiatives to restrict dangerous chemical agents. In addition, Mr Blak pointed out the difficulty in establishing limit values as the reliability of measurement methods varied according to the chemical agent. Finally, he said that biological limit values should be introduced and applied only if absolutely necessary. For the Commission, Mrs Cresson firstly highlighted the political importance of the common position as the principles of health and safety protection should continue to be enhanced at Community level. According to the Commissioner, most of the amendments to the common position were real improvements. This was why the Commission could accept Amendments Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, the first part of 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 18. However, the Commissioner could not accept the second part of Amendment No 5, which imposed on employers the requirement to record a risk assessment in a suitable form, as this measure would weaken the common position which specified that documents should be established in accordance with national law and practice. Mrs Cresson also rejected Amendment No 7 on the principle of substitution to eliminate risk and Amendment No 8 as the proposed addition went beyond the compromise reached within the Council and it would also be possible to come back to this question at the time of the five-year evaluation. Finally, Amendments Nos 10, 14 (removing the term 'and the new findings' from the cases requiring an adaptation of the annexes to technological progress), 16 and 17 should also be rejected.