Safety at work: work equipment, minimum requirements (amend. Directive 89/655/EEC)

1994/0077(SYN) - 14/11/1995

The rapporteur regretted that the Council had rejected the proposals put forward by the Commission and those contained in Parliament's amendments. He warned against any 'deregulation' initiative, based on the criteria of the Molitor Group, which would bring uncertainty to such a fundamental field as the protection of health and safety. Mr Skinner highlighted the number of people who died each year (8 000) or were injured and those who were sick (10 million) due to accidents or illnesses in the workplace. It emphasised the importance of equipment inspections, calling for the priority of human beings to be recognised since Europe had to ensure the safety of workers in its territory. Commissioner Flynn felt that the content of the original proposal had been diluted by the Council's common position. However, in light of the unanimity in the Council, he feared that an uncompromising stance by Parliament and the Commission might be counterproductive; it would be better to adopt a pragmatic and realistic attitude. He therefore proposed taking over 11 of Parliament's 32 amendments: Amendment No 16 on scaffolding, Amendment No 21 on access to the interior of work equipment, and Amendments Nos 5, 9, 13, 14, 19, 23, 27 and 29 as they improved or clarified the content of the common position. However, he rejected Amendments Nos 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 30, 31 and 32 as they only incorporated the original text of the proposal and ignored the common position. Similarly, Amendment No 33 did not appear to achieve, through the time frames laid down for the life expectancy of equipment, the objective of improving the level of worker protection.