

Industrial major-accidents: hazard control, dangerous substances

2001/0257(COD) - 25/06/2002

Pending receipt of the European Parliament's Opinion, the Council established a general approach on the amendment of Council Directive 96/82/EC (the "Seveso II" Directive) on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The Permanent Representatives Committee was instructed to examine the European Parliament's Opinion as soon as it was available so that the Council could adopt a common position. The text approved by the Council, which is based on a Presidency compromise, follows a request from the French delegation for the proposal to be expanded to include provisions concerning ammonium nitrate, which was involved in the accident in Toulouse on 21 September 2001, when an explosion of products containing ammonium nitrate at the AZF chemical plant left thirty people dead and 2 400 injured. Under Article 176 of the Treaty, the Member States' own legislation may set more stringent thresholds than those specified in the Directive. The draft also seeks to extend the scope of Council Directive 96/82/EC in the wake of accidents at a firework manufacturer's premises in Enschede (Netherlands) and a mine in Baie Mare (Romania) and in the light of studies on carcinogens and environmentally dangerous substances carried out by the Commission at the request of the Council. It provides for an obligation on industrial operators to put into effect Safety Management Systems, including a detailed risk assessment using possible accident scenarios.