Safety and health of workers: protection against risk from explosive atmospheres

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PREVIOUS COMMUNITY LEGISLATION: at Community level there are no legal provisions with the exception of two Directives (92/91/EEC and 92/104/EEC) which are intended to protect workers in the extractive industries. This proposal for a directive takes the form of an individual directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Framework Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 (OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, page 1) on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the health and safety of workers at work. It supplements and clarifies the provisions of the Framework Directive. The recitals of Directive 94 /9/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning equipment and protective systems intended for use in potentially explosive atmospheres (OJ L 100, 19.4.1994, page 1), envisaged a supplementary directive which would, in particular, aim at explosion hazards which derive from a given use and/or type and method of installation. PREVIOUS POSITION OF EP: the EP insists that the health and safety of workers are guaranteed the best possible protection. It has always been concerned that workers should gain the maximum possible benefit from the directives on health and safety protection. It has sought to ensure that, where workers speak different languages, information is provided in those languages. SITUATION IN THE MEMBER STATES: legal and administrative provisions exist in several Member States of the European Union. Generally speaking, these are framework laws which are supplemented by administrative provisions and legal instruments. Specific technical provisions usually only exist in respect of electrical sources of ignition in the form of technical orders, guidelines or international or national standards; only a few national provisions exist in respect of mechanical or other sources of ignition.