

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

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The Committee generally considers the Commission draft amendment to be a valuable advance in worker protection and an enhancement of regulatory controls, provided that: (i) it in no way conflicts with the effect of established Health and Safety Directives; (ii) the Committee is informed by the Commission on the proposed arrangements for extending the list of substances to which specific limit values will be applied and the methods by which these will be agreed and established within the European Union. The Committee stresses that the protective measures in the Carcinogenics Directive of 90/395/EEC are in no way affected by the present proposal. They must also be observed in those sectors and activities selected for derogations. The Committee further reminds the Commission of the criticisms and suggestions expressed in its 1988 Opinion on the draft Carcinogenics Directive and urges the Commission to take further action on the basis of it. In the "Specific Comments", the Committee addresses the following issues: - the case for a "guidance note" to help employers and workers to understand the application of the revised Directive to their working environment. This will be of particular help to small and medium-sized undertakings; - the classification of carcinogenic substances; - the reasons for the scope and the duration of the proposed derogations; - the 1 p.p.m. occupational exposure limit for benzene; - the need for a uniform measuring procedure; - cooperation with and between specialist institutes and other bodies in the field of occupational health and safety; - comparability of data.