Safety and health at work: exposure of workers to noise

1992/0449A(COD) - 03/05/2002 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The Commission can accept eleven of the amendments proposed by the European Parliament and two amendments in part. It cannot accept six amendments. Amongst the amendments accepted are the following: -priority to collecitve protection measures, which clarifies the prevention based approach; -the reference to ISO standard which explains the provision relating to measuring; -the alignment of the peak pressure levels of the upper exposure action level with the original Commission proposal, thus providing for some leeway between the upper action level and the exposure limit value. -the risk assessment is to take account of hearing protectors; -workers exposed above the lower exposure limit value are entitled to a simplified audiometric testing, thus reinforcing the prevention aspects of the directive through the possibility of early detection of hearing loss; -the employer must ensure that information and training on the proper use of the various hearing protectors available in the enterprise is given to those workers which might have to use them. This is a more general clause than that proposed by the Parliament. Amongst the amendments not accepted, the most significant is the exemption for music and entertainment sectors. There are no scientific reasons which justify and exclusion, even temporarily, of the music and leisure sectors from the scope of the directive. Furthermore, there are hearing protectors available on the market specifically conceived and adapted to these working environments that do not impair understanding of speech or musical performance. Other amendments rejected include: -Bilbao agency to encourage exchange of good practice; -opinion of the medical authorities responsible. The Commission considers that the way in which Member States obtain scientific or medical opinion for granting derogations is to be dealt with as a matter of subsidiarity.