

# **Health and security at work: protection of workers from the exposure to carcinogens (amend. Directive 90/394/EEC)**

1998/0093(SYN) - 24/09/1998

The Committee unanimously adopted a report by Quinídio CORREIA (PES, P) on the protection of workers from the risks related to carcinogens at work (cooperation procedure, first reading). The Commission proposal for amending Directive 90/394/EEC extends the Directive's cover to include dust from oak and beech wood and vinyl chloride monomer. According to the Commission, for the time being, only the carcinogenicity of oak and beech dust has been confirmed scientifically. The Social Affairs Committee argued, however, that it is highly probable that dust from other types of hardwood can also cause cancer. Because the precautionary principle should be applied in the protection of workers, the directive should cover wood dust from all types of hardwood. Consequently, the limit value of 5,0 mg/m<sup>3</sup> should apply to all hardwood dust. The Committee called for further research on the carcinogenicity of other wood dusts. On the basis of scientific data, the Commission may present a proposal for the adoption of revised limit values for vinyl chloride monomer and wood dust within two years of the date of the Directive. The Committee suggested that the Directive should be implemented within three years from the adoption. To safeguard employment, the provisions relating to wood dusts should apply to existing places of work only after a transition period.