Safety and health at work: exposure of workers to electromagnetic fields

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The committee adopted the report by Manuel PÉREZ ÀLVAREZ (EPP-ED, E) broadly approving the Council's common position under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure, subject to just a few amendments. The committee pointed out that the common position's provisions on health surveillance did not include the points in the Commission's amended proposal, produced in the wake of Parliament's first reading, that stressed the preventive nature of surveillance. MEPs therefore tabled amendments aimed at reinstating the right to a medical examination in the event of over-exposure and strengthening the prevention system set up by the directive. They stipulated that, if health damage resulting from over-exposure was detected, the employer should carry out a reassessment of the risks and ensure that the doctor and/or the medical authority responsible for health surveillance has access to the results of the risk assessment. Individual workers should also be given access to their own personal health records where they so request. The committee also introduced a new article requiring Member States to provide for "effective, proportionate and dissuasive" sanctions if their laws governing this area are broken. In addition, the Commission should inform Parliament every five years of any steps needed in the light of new scientific knowledge, particularly in connection with exposure to static magnetic fields, for which the directive lays down no exposure limits.