European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (amend. Regulation (EC) No 2062/94)

2004/0014(CNS) - 23/04/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to amend the European Agency for Safety and Health at work. PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation CONTENT : the European Agency for Safety and Health at work was established in 1994 to support the EU's Strategy on health and safety at work. In this capacity it plays an important role in providing the Commission with valuable data in order to help it carry out its obligations. Its other tasks include raising awareness on health and safety at work, risk anticipation, supporting SME's and preparing an annual "European week on health and safety". Under the terms of the Regulation setting up the Agency, the Commission is obliged to examine the role of the Agency and, if necessary, propose any changes. In order to fulfil this obligation the Commission launched a consultation exercise, in which it examined the views and opinions of interested parties concerning the Agency's future. A number of important factors had to be taken into account, not least of which was the EU's enlargement in May 2004. Currently, the Agency has a tripartite Administrative Board composed of national government and employer organisation, whilst the Commission has three representatives. In May, following enlargement, the Board grew from 45 members to 78. The Board meets twice a year to take decisions related to the work programme and the budget, whilst the Bureau, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, takes urgent and necessary measures between the Board meetings. It is in order to maintain a flexible Agency that the Commission is proposing the introduction of certain reforms. The proposed amendments to the Agency fall into three main categories: Firstly, to clarify the Agency's objectives and task. Such as: developing better links with the Community's strategy on health and safety at work, strengthening the Agency's data analysis, focusing more on the needs of SME's, providing more accessible and comprehensive information for end users. Secondly, to improve the functioning of the Board and to strengthen its strategic role as well as that of the Bureau, whilst at the same time leaving the Director accountable and responsible for the everyday management of the Agency. Thirdly, to reinforce co-operation with other Community bodies in the sphere of social policy. The proposed amendments reflect the findings of the external evaluation, which took place in 2001, government opinions, the views of employer organisations and the recommendation made by both the Council and the European Parliament. Finally, the proposal reflects the role attributed to it by the revised Commission Strategy on Health and Safety.