Safety and security at work: protection from the risks related to exposure to asbestos (amend. Directive 83/477/EEC)

2001/0165(COD) - 04/10/2002 - Commission communication on Council's position

In general, the Council's common position is in line with the spirit of the Commission's original proposal. However, it incorporates only some of the European Parliament's amendments at first reading accepted by the Commission in its amended proposal. The common position also reformulates the criteria laid down for the possible non-application of certain measures of the Directive in the case of sporadic and limited exposure. The Commission has accepted this reformulation, as it considers that the criteria laid down by the common position on this subject are appropriate and do not imply any reduction in the level of protection of workers. The common position provides for a ban on activities which expose workers to asbestos fibres during the extraction of asbestos, the manufacture and processing of asbestos products, or the manufacture and processing of products containing deliberately added asbestos, with the exception of the treatment and landfill of products resulting from demolition and asbestos removal. The Commission, although it would have preferred to obtain the opinion of the Scientific Committee on Toxicology, Ecotoxicology and the Environment before adopting this ban, accepts it, since its socio-economic impact is very limited and it constitutes reinforced protection of workers' health, which is in line with the European Union's position within the WTO.