# Public health: protection of public and workers against ionizing radiation (rev. Direct. 80/836 /Euratom)

1993/1026(CNS) - 13/05/1996 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to strengthen the existing provisions concerning protection against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation to ensure that the general public and workers enjoy the best possible protection against the harmful effects of such radiation. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Directive 96/29/Euratom laying down the basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation. CONTENT: the Euratom Treaty provides for the establishment within the Community of uniform basic standards to protect the health of the general public and workers against the dangers of ionizing radiation. These basic standards were first laid down in 1959 and have been subsequently amended on several occasions to take account of developments in scientific knowledge in the field of radiation protection. The purpose of this Directive is to strengthen the existing level of protection and it provides, in particular, for the following: - reducing dose and exposure limits for workers and the general public, - maintaining technical consistency with the recommendations of international organisations such as the WHO, the IAEA, the OECD and the ICRP (International Commission on Radiological Protection), - adapting existing legislation to the new situation created by the completion of the internal market. More specifically, the scope of the Directive takes account of practices or activities which may result in a significant increase in the exposure of workers and members of the public to ionizing radiation from artificial or natural sources, which affects the level of radiation protection required. It also provides for appropriate protection measures where intervention is necessary. To ensure compliance with the standards, the Member States will be required to implement a system of declaration and prior authorisation for certain high-risk practices, or to simply prohibit these practices altogether. Provision is made for a system of radiation protection for practices, based on the principles of the justification of exposure, the optimisation of protection and dose limitation (implementation of the principle of "dose constraint" with a view to optimising radiation protection). These limits are determined according to the specific situation of the various groups of persons exposed, such as workers, trainees, students and the other members of the public (particularly pregnant and breastfeeding women). As regards workers, trainees and students, new measures have been taken with regard to exposure in the workplace, including the prior evaluation of hazards, the classification of workplaces and workers, the monitoring of areas and working conditions, and medical checks. Moreover, the Member States must identify activities involving significantly higher levels of exposure to natural radiation sources for workers and the general public and take appropriate protection measures for the activities deemed to be of concern. With regard to the operational protection of the population in normal circumstances, the Member States must establish a system of inspection to maintain strict control over radiation protection for the public and to ensure that the basic standards are respected. Finally, there are provisions to ensure that the Member States are better prepared for radiological emergencies, whether in their own country or in other Member States. In these cases, the Member States must cooperate with each other and, possibly, with other third countries involved so that they will be better prepared for such situations and can manage them more easily. DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION: 13 May 2000. After that date, the directives establishing the basic standards, as last amended by Directive 84/467/Euratom, will be repealed and replaced by this Directive.