Safety, hygiene and health at work: Community programme 1996-2000. Reports included

1998/2015(COS) - 25/02/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Parliament adopted its resolution on the various reports on safety, hygiene and health protection at work drafted by Outi OJALA (GUE/NGL, Finland). Parliament considers it important that the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work and the Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs should strengthen their bilateral co-operation and exchange information, e. g. by holding joint meetings. It is concerned that women make up only a small proportion of the committee's members and recommends that the appointment procedure be changed so that both sexes are equally represented. It urges the Commission to monitor closely the implementation and application of legislation and proposes that the social partners should be involved in this connection; the Commission should give proper consideration to the impact of such legislation on industry. A plan for the harmonisation and evaluation of activities of Member States' authorities, as suggested among others by the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC), and a recommendation for competence criteria and training for employees in the workplace are proposed. The Parliament calls upon the Commission, together with the advisory committee, to draft a strategy and guidelines for the application of the directives. It also calls on the Commission to investigate how co-operation with NGOs can be developed and better use made of their know-how. It urges the Commission to : - promote the best working practice with regard to asbestos as laid down in existing directives and to call for a ban on the marketing, production and use of asbestos in all its forms in the near future; - broaden the scope of the cancer directive gradually so as to cover the substances listed as potentially carcinogenic by the IARC; - expedite the directives on physical factors, scaffolding and on minimum requirements in the transport sector; - draft a proposal on the protection of outdoor workers from factors causing skin cancer. It calls urgaently for the ratification of ILO Convention 176 and the related Recommendation 183. It urges the Commission to investigate the new problem areas which are not covered by current legislation : i.e. stress, burn-out, violence and the threat of violence by customers and harassment at the workplace. It draws attention to the problems resulting from a lack of autonomy at the workplace, monotonous and repetitive work and work with narrow variety of content, all features which are typical of women's work in particular, and it calls for particular attention to be paid to the importance of ergonomics to the improvement of health and safety conditions at the workplace. The EP points to the fact that the health and safety at work of groups which now largely fall outside the scope of legislative protection, such as homeworkers and the self-employed. Lastly, it considers that health and safety at work research ought to be allocated its own budget heading in the EU's research programme.