Safety at work: protection of workers against exposure to carcinogens agents

1995/0229(SYN) - 20/06/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Marjatta STENIUS-KAUKONEN (GUE/NGL, FIN), Parliament approved the proposal for amending the directive with the following amendments: - it asked the Commission to find solutions for simplifying the setting of limit values for carcinogens, particularly those for which limit values based purely on health grounds have already been obtained from scientific evidence and reliable studies; limit values should be set as quickly as possible for all the substances listed as class 1 and 2 carcinogens in Annex VI to Directive 67/548/EEC; - expressing concern about the carcinogenic effects of arsenic and its compounds, Parliament thought they should be added to the priority list of substances for scientific evaluation so limit values could be set as soon as possible; - on the definition of 'limit value' under the directive, Parliament thought this was a compulsory value that could not be exceeded; consequently all derogations envisaged by the Commission, concerning sites and sectors of activity (service stations, garages, etc.) have been deleted. Parliament also defined a worker's 'breathing zone': 'the space from where he takes his breath' and where the carcinogen might be found; - drawing attention to the importance of setting biological limit values for carcinogenic agents, to assess the degree of absorption by means other than breathing; Parliament defined it as the limit of concentration in the appropriate biological medium; - considering that the limit value of concentration of benzene in the air proposed by the Commission (1 ppm over an average period of eight hours) was a compromise between protection of workers and technical constraints, Parliament retained the limit value for benzene proposed by the Commission: a reducing it to 0.1 ppm by 31 December 2000. It also asked for a uniform measuring system for determining the limit value for benzene in the air and that companies that have carcinogens present at the work place prove that they regularly inform workers of the risks of exposure.