Occupational safety and health: risks related to chemical agents (14th particular Directive, Directive 89/391/EEC)

1993/0459(SYN) - 07/04/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to lay down minimum requirements regarding the protection of workers against health and safety hazards related to chemical agents at work or any work activity involving chemical agents. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Directive 98/24/EC on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work. SUBSTANCE: This is the fourteenth individual Directive as referred to in Article 16(1) of Framework Directive 89/391/EEC on the health and safety of workers in the workplace. It covers the following fields: 1) occupational exposure limit values and biological limit values for workers at work; 2) employers' obligations to determine, assess and prevent risks arising from 'hazardous' chemical agents (with a definition of these agents) and protection measures, measures applicable in the event of an accident and information and training measures for workers to limit risks in the event of exposure. Risk assessment measures to be carried out by employers must be compatible with the need to protect public health and the environment. More specifically, the Directive provides for two types of limit value for the work-place: indicative and binding values. National limit values, transposing the Commission's indicative values, may vary in relation to significant differences which exist in national systems. Binding values apply in all cases. In order to limit exposure in excess of the limit values in Member States, employers must take preventive and protective measures. In addition to the principle that employers must carry out assessments, the Directive defines the type of assessment to be performed in relation to dangerous chemicals in the work-place. It lays down health surveillance measures for workers where exposure to hazardous chemicals cannot be avoided. The Commission is to draft practical (non-binding) guidelines for the protection of workers, to accompany the Directive. These may be updated regularly in the light of technical progress. ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Directive enters into force on 25.05.1998. DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION IN THE MEMBER STATES: the Member States must comply with the Directive by 05.05.2001.