Health and safety at work: application of legislation to self-employed workers

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The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Manuel PEREZ AlVAREZ (EPP-ED, E) on the proposal for a Council recommendation concerning the application of legislation governing health and safety at work to self-employed workers. This resolution calls for better protection for the health and safety of the self-employed people. The self-employed are rarely covered by Community legislation on health and safety at work. It should apply to all self-employed workers, irrespective of whether they work alone or with employees in a firm belonging to the self-employed worker or to another person. If the measures taken by the Member States do not prove effective after 4 years from the adoption of this recommendation, the Commission should submit binding measures to ensure that the self-employed are fully covered by existing and future health and safety legislation. The Parliament stresses the need for national information campaigns on health and safety at work, focusing on the specific risks in the various sectors where there is a large number of self-employed workers. Moreover, considerations should be included regarding the health and safety of self-employed workers in their national employment plans, using the experience gained in other Member States or at Community level as a basis for developing appropriate, comparable indicators, such as the rate of accidents among self-employed workers, by sector and sex, age group and other social circumstances. Lastly, the Parliament highlights that as a matter of priority, on specific hazards, taking into account the results of such surveillance in evaluating risks and in planning preventative activities, either in terms of public health, health at work and social security policies, or in terms of sectoral and company level measures, in particular where the use of self-employed workers is relatively regular and foreseeable.