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FOURTH PROGRESS REPORT
OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SAFETY, HYGIENE
AND HEALTH PROTECTION AT WORK
(PERIOD : 1979)

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0. INTRODUCTION

Article 3 of the Council Decision of 27 June 1974 on the setting up of an Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work provides that 'the Committee shall produce an annual report on its activities' and that 'the Commission shall forward the report to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community'.

The fourth progress report was compiled by the Secretariat and approved by the Committee on 22 May 1980.

1. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE, WORKING PARTIES AND RESTRICTED GROUP

1.0. Committee

The members were appointed for a second term of office starting on 23 November 1978 (x); there were four changes in 1979 (one full member and three alternates).

1.1. Working Parties

In accordance with Article 16, paragraph 5 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee renewed the membership of the three Working Parties at the beginning of 1979. There were only three changes during the year.

The existing Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the three Working Parties were reappointed.

1.2. Restricted Group

The membership (the Chairmen and two Vice-Chairmen of each of the three Working Parties) remained the same in 1979.

1.3. Membership was very stable in 1979 and this contributed to the continuity of the work.

1.4. The membership of the Committee, the three Working Parties and the Restricted Group on 31 December 1979 is shown in Annex 1.

(x) Council Decision 78/1014/EEC - O.J. L 349 of

2. STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

2.0. There were no changes in the structure of the Committee in 1979. This shows that the amendments made in the previous year to the terms of reference of the Working Parties, in line with the European Communities' action programme on safety and health at work (O.J. C 165 of 11 July 1978), were satisfactory.

2.1. As a temporary measure to offset the shortage of staff in DG V (in relation to the requirements of the programme and the wishes of the Committee), the Committee increased its activities in furtherance of the action programme.

2.1.0. Throughout the year, the Committee put pressure on the Commission departments concerned to keep things going. Together with the Commission departments, the Committee drew up a programme of work for 1979 (see Annex 2) and asked for a progress report on the work scheduled in this programme to be submitted at each plenary meeting.

2.1.1. The Committee's Working Parties did a certain amount of preparatory work (safety committees in the undertaking, asbestos and noise) and the Committee itself drew up a number of draft proposals. Work of this kind - which should, in the normal way, be done by the Commission departments - underscores the interest the Committee takes in the programme and its progress, but the workload of the Committee and Working Party members was on occasion far too heavy.

Complaints were made about this expansion in the activities of the Committee and Working Parties. The Restricted Group started investigating ways of improving working methods and finding solutions.

- 2.2. Average attendance at Committee and Working Party meetings, which had been satisfactory in the previous four years, was even better in 1979 and really reached a maximum. This can be put down partly to the changes mentioned above and partly to the fact that a number of very important subjects were under discussion. Because of the importance of the subjects discussed, the Committee members were more inclined than in the past to bring an expert with them - provision being made for this in Article 6, paragraph 3 of the Council Decision (74/325/EEC - O.J. L 185 of 9 July 1974) to set up the Committee.
- 2.3. In response to the requests of the Working Parties for alternates for Working Party members and for provision for them to bring experts, the Committee preferred to stand by the Rules of Procedure which did not allow for these two possibilities.

The Commission agreed to invite a very restricted number of expert consultants to specific Working Party meetings where this was absolutely necessary in exceptional cases.

The Committee authorized the members of the Working Parties to appoint substitutes for a trial period under a number of conditions. Little use was made of these two concessions in 1979.

2.4. The preparatory meetings of the workers' and employers' groups before each Committee meeting continued. Being aware of the importance of this preparatory work, in view of the complexity of the subjects involved, the Committee asked the groups to use a spokesman as far as possible and to step up inter-group communication.

2.5. A number of points should be made about the "status" granted to the Committee and its work by some departments and institutions.

2.5.0. Relations with the Commission's DG V developed considerably (possibly 'too much' - see item 2.1.1.). Having been informed of the changes in the structure of DG V/E, the Committee stressed that the practical application of this structure should ensure maximum efficiency in the running of the Committee's secretariat and the implementation of the action programme.

2.5.1. There was an increasing tendency - certainly greater than in the past - for the work (directives) of the Commission's DG III on the elimination of technical barriers to trade to be submitted to the Committee at an early stage. In cases where the Committee is not in a position to act as quickly as DG III would like, DG III tries to voice the views of the Committee at discussions with the Community institutions responsible for examining or making decisions on the directives in question.

2.5.2. The presence of a representative of the Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions as an observer at plenary Committee meetings was extended in 1979 to the Working Party on Statistics and Research.

The Committee felt that improvements were required in its cooperation with the Foundation at both the planning and implementation stage and this appeared to be the wish of both parties. This problem would be examined with the Commission.

3. MEETINGS

- 3.0. The number of meetings and the number of days devoted to the meetings in 1979 and in previous years are shown in the table on page 10. The number of meetings and the number of days devoted to meetings in 1979 were up compared to 1978 by one third and one quarter respectively. The increase was due to the extra plenary Committee meeting and to the fact that Working Party I almost doubled its meetings.
- 3.1. This was mainly because of the increased number of drafts or proposals for directives on technical barriers (DG III) to be examined and (more important) the political priority given to the framework directive on dangerous 'agents' (pollutants) and the first specific directive on lead (see items 4.2.0 and 4.2.1).
- 3.2. For the first time in its existence the Committee had been faced with bottlenecks in its diary of meetings (e.g. six days of meetings in March), and one Working Party had even had to relinquish its meeting dates to another.
- 3.3. It seems likely that the number of meetings in 1979 reached the maximum with which the Secretariat and translation and typing services could cope. The Committee is therefore in a difficult position : giving priority to some tasks is increasingly likely to mean postponing others. This unfortunate but inevitable choice emphasizes the importance of finding efficient working methods (see item 2.1.1.).

	Number of meetings					Number of days devoted to meetings				
	1979	1978	1977	1976	1/2 1975	1979	1978	1977	1976	1/2 1975
Committee	3 (x)	2	2	2	1	6 (x)	6	5	5	2
Working Party I	9 (xx)	5	4	2	1	15 (xxx)	10	6	2	1
Working Party II	2	3	0	1	1	4	4	0	1	1
Working Party III	2 (xxx)	1	2	0	1	2 (xxx)	1	4	0	1
Restricted Group	4	4	2	1	0	4	4	3	1	0
TOTAL	20	15	10	6	4	31	25	18	9	5

(x) Each Committee meeting is preceded by a half-day preparatory meeting of the worker's and employers' groups.

(xx) This includes a one-day meeting for all worker members (of the Committee) to clarify their general views on toxic substances.

(xxx) This includes a one-day of all employer members (of the Committee) to enable them to give final details of their views on safety Committees and delegates in undertakings.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

4.0. General matters

In 1979 work increased greatly in both volume and intensity.

Both the number of meetings and the number of subjects increased considerably.

Contact was established with the Environment Service and the Statistical Office (see items 4.3.2. and 4.3.1.).

The Committee had, on occasion, to make statements at a relatively late stage on work on the elimination of technical barriers to trade (DG III) and restricted itself to the aspects which were essential to safety and health at work.

However, the Committee was able to play a decisive part in the work of DG V implementing the European Communities' action programme on safety and health at work by helping with the framework directive (see item 4.2.0.) and the specific directive on lead (see item 4.2.1.). The Committee recognized the significance of these two directives : the framework directive represented an action sub-programme and the lead directive set a pattern for future specific directives.

4.1. Action programme of the European Communities on safety and health at work (Council resolution of 29 June 1978, O.J. C 165 of 11 July 1978)

4.1.0. In order to implement the programme and plan its own work, the Committee at the end of 1978, had asked for a programme of work for DG V giving details of cases where contact with the Committee and its Working Parties was essential. This was provided at the beginning of 1979.

The programme of work turned out to be optimistic, for the Committee found that DG V was not in a position to observe the deadlines given and to tackle all the subjects listed. Comparison of items 4.6. (summary of work completed) with Annex 2 shows the extent to which work was behind schedule.

4.1.1. The Committee asked to see the report on the progress of the action programme, which the Commission had undertaken to submit annually to the Council, as soon as possible. This report was approved by the Commission at the beginning of 1980 (see Annex 3).

4.1.2. The Committee had hoped that the European Parliament's decision on the Commission's draft budget for 1980 would result in an increase in the staff working on the action programme, but by the end of 1979 it became clear that this would not be possible because of the budgetary problems.

4.2. Committee opinions and proposals requested by the Commission

N.B. : Discussions on the opinions and proposals outlined under this item did not always result in unanimity. The main differences of opinion are indicated.

4.2.0. Proposal for a (framework) directive on the protection of workers from harmful exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work (O.J. C 89 of 5 April 1979)

The Committee was very much in favour of the principle of a framework directive and its field of application. The opinion attached great importance to structural proposals to establish good coordination, and make a clear distinction, between the framework directive itself, the specific directives to come and the functions of a technical adaptation committee.

The opinion also stressed the importance of establishing limit values and harmonized measurement methods, of organizing medical surveillance and of giving priority to technical preventive measures and to collective as against personal protection.

The opinion proposed further agents to be added to the list of agents for which a specific directive would be drawn up, thus doubling their number.

The Committee was pleased to observe that the ideas, basic structures and a number of detailed proposals in its opinion had been broadly taken into account in the proposal for a directive approved by the Commission and submitted to the Council in April 1979.

4.2.1. Proposal for a directive on the protection of workers from harmful exposure to metallic lead and its ionic compounds at work (O.J. C 324 of 28 December 1979)

In the Committee's opinion particular attention was given to exposure limits; the Committee proposed a new idea to the Commission, consisting of distinguishing between atmospheric values (in the air at the workplace) and biological values (in the blood of the workers). The Committee regarded the limit values in air as strict limits, but recognized a transition period when exceptions could be made.

The biological values, on the other hand, were regarded as indicative of the need for action. The Committee was not unanimous about the figures for these limits.

The opinion gave a series of proposals for improvements to the following items : respecting the draft directive medical examinations, working clothing, health protection measures; views differed on special protection for pregnant women and/or women of child-bearing age.

The Committee stressed that the harmonization of measuring and sampling methods was a prerequisite for limit values in air; it asked the Commission to make proposals about these methods as soon as possible.

With regard to the scope of the draft directive, the Committee asked for another directive to be drawn up on organic lead alkyls.

4.2.2. Draft directive on the protection of workers from the harmful effects of exposure to asbestos at work

Having drawn up a general opinion in 1978 on the problem of asbestos, on the basis of a draft action programme for protection from asbestos-linked hazards, the Committee received this draft directive at the end of 1979, in the form of the second specific directive under the framework directive quoted under 4.2.0., and asked a Working Party to draw up an opinion.

4.2.3. Information notices

The Committee asked the Commission to draw up information notices on the risks relating to a certain number of dangerous substances, as laid down in item 7 of the Council resolution on the action programme (see 4.1.), while the specific directives (in application of the framework directive) were being prepared. A working Party was asked to examine an initial draft notice on lead.

- 4.2.4. Proposal for a directive amending the annexes to Council Directive 77/576/EEC on safety signs at places of work
(O.J. L 183 of 19 July 1979)

The Committee's opinion on this draft was favourable.

- 4.2.5. Proposal for a directive on safety requirements for tower cranes for building work (O.J. C 25 of 29 January 1979)

The Committee's opinion on this proposal expressed regret at the absence of provisions on important aspects such as stability, resistance, use and maintenance and asked for these four aspects to be covered in further directives.

In addition to what was already in the proposal, the Committee asked for the minimum requirements for sanitary installations in the cab and provision for devices to which nets could be fixed to be inserted. These proposals were passed on to DG III.

- 4.2.6. Proposal for a directive on powered industrial trucks
(O.J. C 165 of 2 July 1979)

The Committee drew attention to serious omissions in this proposal, such as stability and visibility, and said that it was not forceful enough on the question of noise.

As there was enough time to insert or add proposals about these three problems (because the present proposal would not go through before the general directive on lifting and handling appliances had been accepted), the Committee asked the Commission to submit further provisions in 1980.

4.2.7. Draft directives on rollover protection structures (ROPS), and on falling objects protection structures (FOPS), for certain constructional plant and equipment

The Committee found both projects acceptable where safety at work was concerned.

4.2.8. Follow-up to studies and research

Having been asked to give its views on the follow-up to two pilot studies which had already been carried out on flammable goods and on risks in the construction industry and on the possibility of making general use of the results obtained through ECSC social research, the Committee :

- expressed doubt about whether priority should be given to some additional work on flammable goods;
- proposed six priority research subjects to continue analysis of risks in the construction industry (see item 4.4.1.);
- asked a Working Party to examine various ECSC social research projects.

4.3. Opinions and proposals on the Committee's own initiative

The opinion and proposals listed below are to be regarded as unanimous.

4.3.0. Safety committee/delegates in undertakings and information for workers on the hazards associated with dangerous apparatus and products

The workers' and employers' representatives were unable to reach complete agreement - or even to take similar stands - on a number of basic points in connection with

safety committees/delegates, e.g. the choice of Community instrument (directive or recommendation) and the size and type of undertaking (including non-industrial undertakings) which should have safety committees/delegates.

The Commission and the Committee started to draw up a directive on the provision of adequate information for workers on the hazards associated with dangerous apparatus and products. As there was clearly a connection between the duties of the safety delegates and the informing of workers in general, the Committee proposed that the problem of safety committees and delegates be put aside and studied again in association with 'information for workers' as soon as the latter had reached a sufficiently advanced stage. Preparatory work on the problem of informing workers was handed over to a Working Party at the end of 1979.

4.3.1. Statistics

In connection with item 1 of the Council resolution on the action programme (see 4.1.), the Committee suggested that frequency and severity rates were not particularly useful and did not provide a real basis for a policy of preventive work. The Committee was aware of the complications involved in producing valid statistics of adequate scope and suggested restricted surveys related directly to preventive work.

The Committee stressed to the Commission that the Statistical Office of the European Communities should be asked to propose a plan, possibly for several years, for the implementation of the statistical section of the action programme. The Committee was disappointed with the initial reaction of the SOEC to this request, which was that it was 'impossible for the time being because of lack of staff'.

4.3.2. Noise at work

The Committee examined preparatory documents for the proposal for a directive on the determination of the noise emission of construction plant and equipment - measurement methods (O.J. C 300 of 1 December 1979), the brain child of the Environment and Consumer Protection Service; it noted that a number of directives on technical barriers (DG III) included noise emission limits.

As the framework directive (see 4.2.0.) provided for a specific directive on noise, the Committee decided to prepare an 'a priori' opinion for DG V giving priority to the noise 'received' by the workers.

A Working Party was asked at the end of 1979 to prepare this opinion.

4.3.3. Safety research inventory

The Committee approved a standard questionnaire to be used by the national liaison centres which had already been asked to supply the information for the inventory and agreed to a document drawn up by DG XIII on the implementation of the inventory.

The Committee asked the Commission to draw up the inventory as soon as possible when the preparatory work was over.

4.4. Studies and research

4.4.0. Follow-up to the pilot study on the determination of the type and extent of the hazards involved in the production, use, handling and storage of flammable goods (see item 4.2.8.).

4.4.1. Follow-up to the pilot study on the analysis of occupational risks in the construction industry.

- the Committee selected the following six priority research subjects from the many additional research topics listed in this pilot study and proposed them to the Commission :

- . the effects of duration of work on the risk of accident and ways of improving accident prevention on building sites, taking into account the organizational constraints of night work, shift work, and weekend work, the effective duration of work and the results of efforts to limit the effects of difficult climatic conditions;
- . the main problems associated with the effects of the working conditions peculiar to the building industry on the well-being of workers and ways of improving these working conditions through the ergonomic design and construction of machines and tools and the adaptation of workplaces.

- . developments in and present state of health and safety, including the extent to which standards are drawn up and applied, their effectiveness and the practical means of monitoring them.
 - . the drawing up of a unified system of labour statistics covering occupational accidents, diseases and disorders.
 - . determination of the main environmental factors at the workplace (e.g. climate, dust, noise, etc.) and of measures to reduce their effects if they are harmful to health (unhealthy environment).
 - . the causes of falls in the construction industry.
- At the request of the Committee, the Commission asked the Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working conditions in Dublin how much of this research it could do.
- As the Foundation could not take anything on for at least two years, the Committee considered converting these six research projects into studies and asked a Working Party to examine this possibility.

4.4.2. On the basis of the requests and discussions of the Committee, the Commission handed the following three studies over to experts :

- toxicology for workers;
- the organization of information for workers on the hazards associated with dangerous apparatus and products;
- the professional profile of safety officers in undertaking.

The three studies will act as a basis for the future work

both of the Committee and of the Commission departments.

4.4.3. Ways of following the progress of research and studies financed by the Commission and conducted elsewhere.

The Committee wanted to have more direct influence over the choice of some of the studies and research projects (safety and health at work) and asked the Commission for more information on progress and results.

4.4.4. Follow-up to ECSC social research (see item 4.2.8.)

4.5. Information and documentation

The Committee received the literature listed below either on request or on the initiative of the Secretariat. It represents either general documentation or preparatory information on specific activities. The documents marked + were discussed.

Legal instruments in general

- Legal value and basis of all Community instruments and associated procedures (Commission Legal Service) +.
- Progress in the ratification of ILO instruments (safety and health) (DG V) +.

Technical barriers

- Total or partial harmonization in connection with the elimination of technical barriers (Commission Legal Service) +.
- Note from the Danish Government.
- Note on technical barriers for the European Parliament (DG III) (x).

Framework directive (see 4.2.0.)

- Note on the terminology of exposure limits and measurement and sampling methods (DG V) (x).
- Toxic Substances Control Act - U.S.A. (DG V) +.
- Agreement between the U.S.A. and the Commission (exchange of information on toxicology) (DG V) +.

Asbestos (see 4.2.2.)

- 'Bewertung der Tumorrisiken' (assessment of the tumour hazards).
- 'Outbreak of pleural mesothelioma and chronic fibrosing pleurisy in a village of Turkey';

Safety research inventory (see 4.3.3.)

- Classification table (B.A.U. - Germany);
- Test on the Eurosin system;
- 'Techniques de gestion de la sécurité' (INRS - France)
(safety management techniques);
- 'Essai de classement des risques professionnels' (INRS - France)
(trial classification of occupational risks);
- Research programme 1979/80 of H.S.E./U.K.

Noise (see 4.3.2.)

- Study - Damage and annoyance caused by noise (DG V) +.

Research (see 4.4.)

- Review of ECSC social research (DG V) +.

4.6. Summary of the Committee's main activities in 1979

4.6.0. The table on the following pages gives an overall view of the main activities of the Committee. Formal opinions represent a good half of these activities, and relate mainly to proposals for or draft directives.

4.6.1. This summary shows clearly that :

- the action programme is already having an effect;
- work on the elimination of technical barriers is continuing;
- in addition to its association with DG V, the Committee has established closer relations with five other Commission services (DG III, DG XIII, Environment, Legal Service, Statistical Office).

4.6.2. The fact that the work taken on by the Committee is increasing in volume and significance provides evidence both of the Committee's vitality and of the vital nature of its role in supplementing the work of the Commission Departments, which are hampered by lack of staff.

4.6.3. Work started (S) and planned (P) will progress or be completed in 1980; further work will be added.

	Form	Heading	Subject	Commission department	Committee Working Party concerned in preparatory work (xx)	Stage
	O = opinion P = proposal R = request		(for details, refer to report item number shown in brackets)	Commission department		C = completed S = started P = planned
At the Commission's request	A	Framework directive	Protection of workers from harmful exposure to chemical physical and biological agents at work (4.2.0.)	DG V	W.P.1	C
	A	Specific directive	Protection of workers from harmful exposure to metallic lead and its ionic compounds at work (4.2.1.)	DG V	W.P.1	C
	A	Specific directive	Protection of workers from the harmful effects of exposure to asbestos at the workplace (4.2.2.)	DG V	W.P.1	S
	P	Information notice (x)	General concept (4.2.3.)	DG V	W.P.3	P

(v) in relation to the specific directives mentioned

O	Directive	Powered industrial trucks (4.2.6.)	DG III	W.P.1	C
O	Directive	Protection structures for certain construction site plant, and equipment, against: - rollover (ROPS) - falling objects (FOPS) (4.2.7.)	DG III	W.P.1	C
O	Directive	Noise measurement methods (4.3.2.)	Environment +	W.P.1	S
O	Etudes	Follow-up to - two pilot studies (flammable substances + construction industry); - ECSC social research (1.2.8)	DG V	W.P.2	- C - S
P	Community instrument	- Safety committee/delegates in undertakings; - information for workers (4.3.0.)	DG V	W.P.3	- C - S
P	Programme	Plan of work on statistics (4.3.1)	SOEC + + DG V	W.P.2	C
O	Specific directive	Noise (worker protection) (4.3.2.)	DG V	W.P.1	P

At the
Committee's
request

A	Directive	Safety research inventory	DG XIII	W.P.2	S
P	Research or study	Six priority subjects in connection with the building construction industry (4.4.1)	DG V	W.P.2	S
P	Research	General use of ECSC research (4.4.4.)	DG V	W.P.2	P
R	Information and documentation	Various subjects (4.5.=	DG V + Legal Service	W.P.1 + W.P.2	C + P

(xx) W.P.1: Technical Preventive Measures and Regulations Relating to Health and Safety at Work

W.P.2: Statistics and Research

W.P.3: Role of Both Sides of Industry, Problems of Training and Information.

5. ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING PARTIES

5.0. The table under item 4.6. also shows the preparatory work done by the Working Parties.

In order to be able to meet some of the deadlines, the Committee allowed the Working Party to start some of the work before any formal request was made.

5.1. Working Party 1 did most of the preparatory work (number of meetings and subjects). This is because it is responsible for regulations - a field in which the Commission departments have most proposals to submit and to which, being regarded as urgent, they give a measure of priority.

5.2. Working Party 2 had fewer requests from the Commission and fewer proposals. On its own initiative, this Working Party examined the problems associated with research and studies and its work filled a number of gaps left by the Commission departments in these fields.

5.3. Working Party 3 worked along the principles as Working Party 2. The topics dealt with (which are more political) are more delicate and sometimes thorny. Thus it proved difficult to reach agreement within the Working Party on problems such as the rights of workers in relation to the enforcing of protective measures and the obligations of employers in relation to safety.

6. ACTIVITIES OF THE RESTRICTED GROUP

The Restricted Group continued its organizational and preparatory work.

The Group had been set up by the Committee in 1976 and had more than justified its existence.

In addition to its 'normal' activities, the Restricted Group was faced with the problem of finding ways of running the Committee and Working Parties more efficiently from within (for lack of external means), and this would be an even greater problem in 1980.

7. SECRETARIAT

7.0. The membership of the Secretariat remained the same in 1979 (2 A grade and 2 C grade officials), but for several months one of the C grade officials did very little secretariat work.

7.1. As a result of the increase in the number of meetings (see item 3.0.), the Secretariat had more work than it could cope with and the shortage of staff was evident on a number of occasions :

- the Rules of Procedure of the Committee could not be followed (deadlines for submitting documents - one set of minutes for two meetings);
- lack of documents in certain languages;
- the very succinct nature of some reports.

This situation gave rise to criticisms and protests from many members of the Committee and Working Parties.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.0. Some of the comments under the preceding items in this report represent conclusions in themselves on fairly detailed practical problems and are not repeated here; some of them have in any case already been outlined in other progress reports.
- 8.1. The Committee can claim to have succeeded in gradually extending its activities, despite the organizational problems, during 1979 and in a general way over its five years of existence.
- 8.2. The Committee is glad to have been able to help in and positively influence a wide range of activities. Having helped the Commission in 1978 to establish the European Communities' action programme on safety and health at work; it was able in 1979 to participate in finalizing a major offshoot of the programme, in the form of the framework directive on the protection of workers from harmful exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work.
- 8.3. The Committee is having an increasing impact on the work of various Commission departments in connection with occupational safety, medicine and toxicology. This was pertinently underscored at the end of 1979, by the Committee's Chairman, who - speaking as a Commission representative - said that if the Committee had not existed, the work of the Commission in the fields covered by the action programme would never have achieved its present significance.

8.4. The Committee wishes to express its appreciation of the enormous amount of work done by the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and members of the Working Parties.

8.5. The Committee appreciates the work done by the Commission departments, particularly those under DG V, and the Secretariat to launch the European Communities' action programme on safety and health at work, but feels that it does not go far enough.

More should be done - and more quickly - to safeguard the safety and health of workers.

It is clear to the Committee that the action programme, which is supposed to cover the period up to 1982, will fall far short of all reasonable expectations if the staff situation remains as it is.

8.6. The Committee is of the opinion that, in view of the urgency of its mission to improve the health and safety of workers, its work should not be hampered by material obstacles or staff problems.

Bilag I - Anlage I
Appendix I - Annexe I
Allegato I - Bijlage I

MEDLEMMER
MITGLIEDER
MEMBERS
MEMBRES
MEMBRI
LEDEN

- A = Repraesentanter for regeringen
Regierungsvertreter
Representatives of the Government
Représentants du gouvernement
Rappresentanti del governo
Vertegenwoordigers van de Regering
- B = Repraesentanter for arbejdstagernes faglige organisationer
Vertreter der Arbeitnehmerorganisationen
Representatives of trade unions
Représentants des organisations syndicales de travailleurs
Rappresentanti delle organizzazioni sindacali dei lavoratori
Vertegenwoordigers van de organisaties van werknemers
- C = Repraesentanter for arbejdsgivernes faglige organisationer
Vertreter der Arbeitgeberorganisationen
Representatives of employers' organizations
Représentants des organisations syndicales d'employeurs
Rappresentanti delle organizzazioni sindacali dei datori di lavoro
Vertegenwoordigers van de organisaties van werkgevers

Rådgivende udvalg - Beratender Ausschuss - Advisory Committee - Comité consultatif
Comitato consultivo - Raadgevend Comité

	Titulaires Faste medlemmer Mitglieder Full members Membri titolari Gewone leden	Suppléants Suppleanterne Stellvertreter Alternate members Membri supplenti Plaatsvervangende leden	Titulaires Faste medlemmer Mitglieder Full members Membri titolari Gewone leden	Suppléants Suppleanterne Stellvertreter Alternate members Membri supplenti Plaatsvervangende leden
A.				
België/Belgique	M. BENS	M. PAQUE	M. DENONNE	M. GREGOIRE
Danmark	Hr. SAXILD	Hr. LAURBERG	Fr. JENSEN	Hr. BLOU
B.R. Deutschland	Herr KLIESCH	Herr OPFERMANN	Herr WAGNER	Herr WOLFF
France	Mme LAMIRAND	M. BABUSLAUX	M. COURSAULT-DURAND	M. BELHOTE
Ireland	Mr. KENNEDY	Mr. MORRISON	Mr. CASHELL	Mr. MURPHY
Italia	Sig. FREDELLA	Sig. FRANCIOSI	Sig. FIORE	Sig. POTI
Luxembourg	M. SCHUSTER	M. MOUSEL	M. NOESEN	M. DEMUTH
Nederland	Dhr. DE ROOS	Dhr. RIKMENSPOEL	Dhr. WINK	Dhr. LIGTERINGEN
United Kingdom	Mr. MARTIN	Mrs. BARGER	Mr. NEILD	Mr. BLACKADDER
B.				
België/Belgique	M. THYRE	M. KENNES	M. SILON	M. COLLE
Danmark	Hr. DREWSEN	Hr. NIELSEN	Fr. CHRISTENSEN	Hr. ELIKOFER
B.R. Deutschland	Herr KONSTANTY	Herr KIENAPPEL	Herr PARTIKEL	Herr GÄRTNER
France	M. ATLAN	M. ROUXEL	M. GUILLON	M. DIAZ
Ireland	Mr. CASSELLS	Mr. O'HALLORAN	Mr. DALY	Mr. KEATING
Italia	Sig. STANZANI	Sig. LELI	Sig. LUCIANI	Signora GLORIA
Luxembourg	M. RECH	M. DUNKEL	M. SABUS	M. KLEIN
Nederland	Dhr. DE BRUIN	Dhr. BURINGH	Dhr. ROGENES	Dhr. SCHMITZ
United Kingdom	Mr. JACQUES	Mr. HAMILTON	Mr. LLOYD	Mr. PARRY
C.				
België/Belgique	M. VAN GAEVER	M. CLOQUET	M. CORDY	M. LEONARD
Danmark	Hr. HOLM	Hr. RASMUSSEN	Hr. NYGAARD	Hr. LINIUS
B.R. Deutschland	Herr MEYER	Herr WINCKLER	Herr MÜLLER	Herr VON HASSELL
France	M. CAVÉ	M. FREDERIC-MOREAU	M. TASSIN	M. DELAGE
Ireland	Mr. RICE	Mr. DOHERTY	Mr. CLARKE	Mr. CASSIDY
Italia	Sig. GARLANDA	Sig. PALLADINO	Sig. BUSSETTI	Sig. GHISELLI
Luxembourg	M. RAUCHS	M. BERWEILER	M. OLINGER	M. BEFFORT
Nederland	Dhr. DEN BOER	Mevr. DE QUANT	Maj. DE MEESTER	Dhr. KORTEN
United Kingdom	Mr. AMIS	Mr. PETRIE	Mr. COBB	Mr. DEWSBURY

Abejdsgruppe I - Arbeitsgruppe I - Working Party I - Groupe de travail I - Gruppo di lavoro
Werkgroep I

Tekniske og forskriftsmæssige aspekter i forbindelse med forebyggelse og beskyttelse
Technische Aspekte und Vorschriften der Unfallverhütung und des Gesundheitsschutzes
Technical protective measures and regulations relating to health and safety at work
Aspects techniques et réglementaires de la prévention et de la protection
Aspetti tecnici e normativi della prevenzione e della protezione
Technische en reglementaire aspecten van de ongevallenpreventie en gezondheidsbescherming

	A	B	C
België Belgique	M. BENS	M. SILON x)	M. CORDY
Danmark	Hr. SAXILD	Hr. ELIKOFER	Hr. NYGAARD
Bundesrepublik Deutschland	Herr HORNEFFER	Herr PARTIKEL	Herr ROBOCK
France	M. JANIN	M. LEVY	M. CAVE
Ireland	Mr. KENNEDY	Mr. DALY	Mr. CLARKE xx)
Italia	Sig. FIORE xx)	Sig. STANZANI	Sig. GARLANDA
Luxembourg	M. SCHUSTER	M. SABUS	M. OLINGER
Nederland	dhr. RIKMENSPOEL	dhr. BURINGH	dhr. DEN BOER
United Kingdom	Mr. WOODCOCK	Mr. JACQUES	Mr. COBB

x) Président

xx) Vice-président

Arbejdsgruppe II - Arbeitsgruppe II - Working Party II - Groupe de travail II -
Gruppo di lavoro II - Werkgroep II

Statistik og Forskning
Statistik und Forschung
Statistics and research
Statistiques et recherches
Statistiche e ricerche
Statistiek en onderzoek

	A	B	C
België Belgique	M. HUBLET	M. THYRE	M. CORDY
Danmark	Fr. JENSEN	Hr. DREWSEN	Hr. NYGAARD
Bundesrepublik Deutschland	Herr. HAGENKÖTTER	Herr. KIENAPPEL	Herr. BASTONG
France	M. MOYEN	M. GUILLON xx)	M. FREDERIC-MOREAU
Irland	—	Mr. O'HALLORAN	—
Italia	Sig. FREDELLA	Sig. LELI	Sig. RIMA
Luxembourg	M. DEMUTH	M. KLEIN	M. RAUCHS
Nederland	dhr. LIGTERINGEN	dhr. SCHMITZ	dhr. DEN BOER x)
United Kingdom	Mr. NEILD xx)	Mr. OWEN	Mr. DEWSBURY

x) Président

xx) Vice-président

Arbejdsgruppe III - Arbeitsgruppe III - Working Party III - Groupe de travail III -
Gruppo di lavoro III - Werkgroep III

Arbejdsmarkedets parters rolle, problemer i forbindelse med uddannelse of information
Rolle der Sozialpartner, Ausbildungs- und Informationsprobleme
Role of both sides of industry, problems of training and information
Rôle des partenaires sociaux, problèmes de formation et d'information
Ruolo delle parti sociali, problemi di formazione e d'informazione
Rol van de sociale partners, opleiding en voorlichting

	A	B	C
België Belgique	M. NUYTS	M. KENNES	M. CORDY
Danmark	Hr. OVERGÅRD-HANSEN	Hr. ELIKOFER	Hr. FALK
Bundesrepublik Deutschland	Herr ANZINGER	Herr KONSTANTY	Herr VON HASSELI
France	M. JANIN	M. CHAVROT	M. TASSIN xx)
Ireland	Mr. CASHELL	Mr. CASSELLS x)	Mr. RICE
Italia	Sig. FIORE	Sig. LUCIANI	Sig. NASONI
Luxembourg	M. SCHUSTER xx)	M. RECH	M. MARCUE
Nederland	dhr. VOS	dhr. DE BRUIN	Mej. DE MEESTER
United Kingdom	Mr. MUNNS	Mr. HAMILTON	Mr. DEWSBURY

x) Président

xx) Vice-président

WORK PROGRAMME - 1979

The Council resolution of 29 June 1978 on safety and health at work provides for 14 measures

Definition of the measures	Work projected	Liaison with Working Parties
1) <u>Statistics</u>	Collect national statistics on occupational sickness analyse the results of the study of accidents and sickness in the building sector examine the results of the sectoral survey planned in the steel sector	Working documents to be submitted to Working Party II by June 1979
2) <u>Research</u>	Define an approach to research policy (specific example: flammable substances) identify the subjects for research, continue the work already undertaken on the two lists	Examination of these three problems by Working Party II
3) <u>Standardization of terminology and exposure limits</u>	Examine the conclusions of the study completed in February 1979 3.1. Define exposure limits prepare specific directives on lead, asbestos and cadmium 3.2. Outline directive concerning pollutants preparation completed	A proposal to be submitted to Working Party I by March 1979, the others before the end of 1979 Proposal to be submitted to the Consultative Committee in February 1979
4) <u>Carcinogenic substances</u>	Continue joint studies with the Institut de Lyon Prepare a general action programme	To be submitted to Working Parties I and II and to the Consultative Committee before the end of 1979
5) <u>Biological indicators etc.</u>	Study proceeding	First report to be submitted to the Consultative Committee before December 1979

6) <u>Assessment of risks</u>	Study proceeding Preparation of a joint symposium with the Consultative Committee for March 1980	Progress report to be submitted to Working Parties I and II, 2nd half of 1979
7) <u>Introduction and provision of information</u>	Adaptation of the directive on safety signs Establish a general notice on toxicology Prepare a notice on lead and cadmium	First report to be submitted to Working Parties I and III
8) <u>Noise and vibrations</u>	Report on vibrations (study completed) Collect and analyse data on 'noise' Examine the directive - DG III	First report to be submitted to Working Party I before July 1979
9) <u>Accident prevention, safety, ergonomics</u>	Collect information on the studies being carried out by the ECSC Prepare general action programme	First report to be submitted to Working Parties I and II, 2nd half of 1979
10) <u>Monitoring</u>	Joint study with the Dublin Foundation	First report to be submitted to Working Parties I and II, 2nd half of 1979
11) <u>Occupational medicine</u>	Study proceeding	First report on the conclusions to be sub- mitted to Working Party I and to the Con- sultative Committee before December 1979
12) <u>Special monitoring and accidents</u>	Directive being prepared on industrial activities	Report to be submitted to Working Party I before June 1979
13) <u>Organization of inspection by public authorities</u>	Joint study with the Dublin Foundation 'and the ILO	First report to be submitted to Working Parties I and II, 2nd half of 1979
14) <u>Schemes for introduction and provision of information</u>	Study proceeding	First report to be submitted to Working Party III before June 1979

COMMISSION
OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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FIRST REPORT ON THE ACTION PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

INTRODUCTION

Background to the programme

The Council resolution of 29 June 1978 on an action programme of the European Communities on Safety and Health at Work (OJ C165 of 11.7.1978) invites the Commission to submit an annual report on the progress made in implementing this resolution.

This action programme figures among a range of important and somewhat similar activities which are currently being undertaken by the Commission. The various actions are based on a total programme which directly concerns the life and working conditions of workers, whilst at the same time dealing with aspects of the social infrastructure of our society. Thus the physical and social interests of more than 100 million workers will be covered by this action programme.

The programme finds its place among a range of measures that are required by today's industrial society. Such society brings with it both benefits as well as risks, and these risks bear both upon people working in factories and workplaces as well as those in areas outside. In today's world, the population in general is becoming more aware of these direct and indirect dangers. It is the task of those who are responsible to recognize this complex of problems and to take action to diminish risks to the minimum by increasing worker safety and health such that the dignity of man at work is maintained and improved.

Modern developments in today's industrial society in the technical area and in the production process require constant supervision, and sometimes involve the implementation of strict measures which themselves involve workers.

These elements, and others like them, form the basis of the action programme which in itself reflects one of the important concerns of the Commission - namely to contribute to the well-being of man at work as part of the socio-economic structure of the Economic Community.

This first report is concerned with giving an overall view. It begins by presenting a brief summary of the Community's Action Programme on Safety and Health at Work, then goes on to discuss the implementation of that programme. The report seeks to give a picture of the work that has been undertaken, but it does not cover all details of the work that has been carried out in the past year. There are many studies and working groups, whose efforts are only now coming to fruition and from which conclusions still have to be drawn.

The report concentrates primarily on activities which have already led or are about to lead to proposals or drafts by the Commission to the Council, in the form of directives, decisions, or resolutions.

It is important to stress that the many actions undertaken within the framework of the Coal and Steel and the Euratom treaties and also aimed at increasing the safety and health at work are not covered by this report.

One of the most important proposals that has been sent to the Council concerns a "Proposal for a Council Directive on the protection of workers from harmful exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work" (OJ C89 of 5.4.1979). This proposal was submitted to the Council on 6 March 1979 and was considered by the first working group of experts of the Council on 19 June 1979.

It is clear that although much has been achieved in the past year, there is still a lot that needs to be performed in the future. It has not been possible to achieve all that was hoped for in the first year, principally because of a shortage of manpower. Despite this shortage, with the support of the Council, the Parliament, and the Economic and Social Committee, the programme has resulted in several important initiatives being taken in the field of safety and health at work. However the fulfilment of this programme in an adequate fashion between now and 1982 can only be assured by the correction of this manpower shortage.

Actions to be undertaken

In its resolution the Council agreed that the following actions could be undertaken up to the end of 1982:

Accident and disease aetiology connected with work - Research.

1. Establish, in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the European Communities, a common statistical methodology in order to assess with sufficient accuracy the frequency, gravity and causes of accidents at work, and also the mortality, sickness and absenteeism rates in the case of diseases connected with work.
2. Promote the exchange of knowledge, establish the conditions for close cooperation between research institutes and identify the subjects for research to be worked on jointly.

Protection against dangerous substances.

3. Standardize the terminology and concepts relating to exposure limits for toxic substances. Harmonize the exposure limits for a certain number of substances, taking into account the exposure limits already in existence.
4. Develop a preventive and protective action for substances recognized as being carcinogenic, by fixing exposure limits, sampling requirements and measuring methods, and satisfactory conditions of hygiene at the work place, and by specifying prohibitions where necessary.
5. Establish, for certain specific toxic substances such as asbestos, arsenic, cadmium, lead and chlorinated solvents, exposure limits, limit values for human biological indicators, sampling requirements and measuring methods, and satisfactory conditions of hygiene at the workplace.

6. Establish a common methodology for the assessment of the health risks connected with the physical, chemical and biological agents present at the workplace, in particular by research into criteria of harmfulness and by determining the reference values from which to obtain exposure limits.
7. Establish information notices on the risks relating to and handbooks on the handling of a certain number of dangerous substances such as pesticides, herbicides, carcinogenic substances, asbestos, arsenic, lead, mercury, cadmium and chlorinated solvents.

Prevention of the dangers and harmful effects of machines

8. Establish the limit levels for noise and vibrations at the workplace and determine practical ways and means of protecting workers and reducing sound levels at places of work. Establish the permissible sound levels of building-site equipment and other machines.
9. Undertake a joint study of the application of the principles of accident prevention and of ergonomics in the design, construction and utilization of the plant and machinery, and promote this application in certain pilot sectors, including agriculture.
10. Analyse the provisions and measures governing the monitoring of the effectiveness of safety and protection arrangements and organize an exchange of experience in this field.

Monitoring and inspection - improvement of human attitudes

11. Develop a common methodology for monitoring both pollutant concentrations and the measurement of environmental conditions at places of work; carry out intercomparison programmes and establish reference methods for the determination of the most important pollutants. Promote new monitoring and measuring methods for the assessment of individual exposure, in particular through the application of sensitive biological indicators. Special attention will be given to the monitoring of exposure in the case of women, especially of expectant mothers, and adolescents. Undertake a joint study of the principles and methods of application of industrial medicine with a view to promoting better protection of workers' health.
12. Establish the principles and criteria applicable to the special monitoring relating to assistance or rescue teams in the event of accident or disaster, maintenance and repair teams and the isolated worker.
13. Exchange experience concerning the principles and methods of organization of inspection by public authorities in the fields of safety, hygiene at work and occupational medicine.
14. Draw up outline schemes at a Community level for introducing and providing information on safety and hygiene matters at the workplace to particular categories of workers such as migrant workers, newly recruited workers and workers who have changed jobs.

Implementation of the action programme

1. Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work

Since it is essential to encourage the increasing participation of management and labour in the decisions and initiatives in the field of safety, hygiene and health protection at work at all levels, particularly at the level of the undertaking, the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work, set up by Council Decision 74/325/EEC of 27 June 1974 (OJ No. L185 of 9.7.1974) has been closely associated with this work. The Council has appointed the members and alternate members of this Committee in its Decision 78/1014/EEC of 23 November 1978 (OJ No. L349 of 13.12.1978) for the period from 23 November 1978 to 22 November 1981.

In order to adapt its structure to the Community action programme, the Committee extended the terms of reference of its three working parties, giving them the following titles:

Working Party I	"Technical Preventive Measures and Regulations Relating to Health and Safety at Work"
Working Party II	"Statistics and Research"
Working Party III	"Role of Both Sides of Industry, Problems of Training and Information".

For the purpose of liaison and cooperation with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the Committee invited an observer from this organization to attend its meetings.

The Commission has, during the past year, received much welcome advice from the Committee, and this cooperation will continue in the application of this Programme of Action.

2. Work on Individual Actions.

Action 1. Statistics. The only Community statistics on accidents at work which currently exist are those concerned with coal and steel. The Commission has been unable to develop adequately these statistics for other areas due to a lack of manpower. Nevertheless studies are currently underway relating to the construction industry and an in depth sectorial survey is also being conducted in the steel industry. A detailed analysis of these results will be carried out in 1980 so that the major factors involved in accidents can be identified with a view to developing appropriate preventive measures.

As regards other statistics relating to mortality sickness and absenteeism, the Commission is similarly limited by the manpower shortages.

Action 2. Research. The research programmes in the coal and steel industry are continuing, and the Commission is using the approaches adopted in this area as a model for defining an approach to research policy in the field of safety and health at work for the other sectors of the economy, as well as identifying suitable subjects for research. This work is being pursued further together with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. It is anticipated that a framework research programme will be elaborated in 1981.

The Commission has also launched a feasibility study concerned with a documentation system for all research projects and research in progress in the field of occupational health.

Action 3. Concepts, terminology and exposure limits. A study has already been completed entitled "Comparative analysis of the principles and application of control limits in the Member States of the European Community". This study shows the wide differences in terminology and concepts currently existing between Member States regarding exposure limits, and that these concepts are in a state of continual development. Meetings of national experts have already been held to discuss this study and it is planned to hold further meetings to finalize it, and to provide elements for the harmonization which is urgently needed at Community level.

This work is being conducted in close cooperation with ILO and WHO, but it is obvious that for the Member States there is an urgent need to achieve common agreement on the words used, and to define as closely as possible the different terms in national regulations which often do not cover the same things.

Action 4. Carcinogens. The Commission is drawing up a policy of specific action on the carcinogens. To this effect it considers that a general Directive dealing with the principles of prevention and protection will be appropriate; this will be proposed in the near future.

This policy will take into account the International Labour Conference Convention No. 139 and Recommendation No. 147 concerning prevention and control of occupational hazards caused by carcinogenic substances and agents. In addition the Commission will continue its active collaboration with the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

A Directive dealing with a carcinogen has already been accepted. This is the Council Directive on the approximation of Member States' laws, regulations and administrative provisions on the health of workers exposed to vinyl chloride monomer (OJ L 197 of 22.7.1978).

Action 5. Specific toxic substances. The Commission has sent to the Council a proposal for a Council Directive on the protection of workers from harmful exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work (OJ C 89 of 5.4.1979) on which discussions by a working group of the Council began in June.

The objective of this Directive is the protection of workers who are or who are likely to be exposed at work to risks to their health and safety arising from chemical, physical and biological agents, including the prevention of such risks through elimination or limitation of the exposure of the workers concerned to these agents.

This Directive, which will affect the majority of the workers in the Community, requires that Member States enact framework legislation which will ensure that exposure of workers to agents shall be kept as low as can be reasonably achieved. Such legislation shall include the possibility of:

- introducing prevention at the technical level;
- establishing exposure limit values not to be exceeded as well as sampling procedures and measuring methods;
- introducing collective and personal protection measures;
- setting hygiene requirements;
- providing information for workers on the potential risks to which they are exposed, and the technical preventive measures taken;
- setting requirements for the precautions to be taken by the employer and the worker;
- introducing the use of warning and safety signs;
- requiring medical surveillance;
- keeping updated records of exposure levels, lists of workers exposed to agents and medical records;
- introducing emergency procedures for abnormal exposures.

The Commission further proposed that:

- workers and/or their representatives shall be involved with the elaboration and application of the above provisions;
- a worker shall not suffer undue prejudice from these provisions, in particular if there is the need to remove him from exposure to any of the agents;
- the application of these provisions should not lead to undue effects outside the workplace, such as increase in pollution levels.

The Commission recognized that for a certain number of agents further specific proposals for Directives would be required. The following additional measures are to apply to these agents:

- health surveillance should begin prior to exposure, continue periodically during exposure and also take place following the end of exposure;
- workers shall be provided with the results of exposure measurements and where appropriate with the results of group biological tests of exposure; similarly individual workers shall have access, where appropriate, to the results of their own biological tests of exposure. In order to assist them with the interpretation of the results and to further inform them of the potential hazards of the agents specifically prepared information and documentation at national and/or Community levels shall be made available.

Finally, in this proposal for a directive the Commission recognized that a number of the provisions are of a technical or scientific nature which will in the future require further elaboration and adaptation to technical and scientific progress. The Commission therefore proposed the setting up of a Technical Committee called "The Industrial Medicine and Hygiene Committee" which would function according to well established rules and would have competence for all these technical matters.

With regard to the specific proposals for Directives, the Commission has just submitted to the Council a proposal on lead; a proposal on asbestos will follow.

Action 6. Assessment of risks. A number of criteria studies (dose/effect relationships) have already been performed and published. These include lead, asbestos, cadmium and organophosphorus pesticides. These studies have complemented the work of WHO, ILO and other international bodies who have also performed similar work thus obviating the need for Member States to perform similar exercises and resulting in an economy of effort. The results of these studies have already been used by the Commission in evaluating the risks to human health due to exposure and thus provide the necessary elements for legal instruments which are to be subsequently submitted to the Council.

Action 7. Information notices. The Commission considers that the Council Directive of 25 July 1977 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to the provision of safety signs at places of work (OJ No. L229 of 7.9.1977) is an important step in having a common basis for the information of workers concerning the dangers and the necessary safety precautions at the workplace. The Commission has already held meetings of the Committee concerned with amendments to technical progress and to future developments in international methods regarding signs. An adaptation to this Directive has already been made, taking into account the viewpoint of the Advisory Committee in the Commission Directive of 21 June 1979 amending the Annexes (OJ No. L183 of 19.7.1979).

Work has already begun on the preparation of information notices and a first draft has been prepared on lead. It will shortly be submitted for opinion to the Advisory Committee. The Commission intends to use the criteria (dose/effect relationships) documents already published on asbestos (EUR 5653e) and cadmium (EUR 5697) as background documents for the preparation of information notices on these agents.

Action 8. Noise and vibrations. On the subject of noise the Commission has already published a report on "Damage and annoyance caused by noise" EUR 5398. The Commission intends to use this document as one of the background elements in drawing up a proposal on limitation of noise at work.

Action 9. Accident prevention, ergonomics. The majority of the work in this area has been carried out in the coal and steel sector. In the coal and steel industries, the Commission has established the principles for accident prevention which takes into account the concept of integrated safety. Ergonomic research is being carried out not only at the workplace but also in national institutes, which will thus lead to a significant improvement in the safety and quality of life at the workplace. The Commission is currently studying how similar principles can be applied to the construction industry and to the agricultural sector.

Action 10. Monitoring of safety and protection. The Commission has already instituted studies concerned with toxicovigilance systems. It is anticipated that systems of this nature will give an early warning of new and previously unknown hazards to man's health and safety at work. With regard to the dissemination of information concerning such newly identified hazards, a workshop was held by the Commission in conjunction with ILO on a hazard alert system. The aim of this system is to pass information about newly discovered hazards in the workplace, and how to protect against them rapidly through an international network of collaborating centres.

Action 11. Intercomparison programmes, biological monitoring, industrial medicine. Within the framework of the Council Directive on biological screening of the population for lead (OJ No. L105 of 28.4.1977) the Commission has already carried out work involved with the quality assurance of lead measurements, which it is intended to develop for the work situation.

The Commission is in the process of publishing a series of monographs on biological monitoring. These monographs are intended as up to date reviews of the available data on a number of pollutants with a view to indicating the possibilities of carrying out biological monitoring.

A study has been completed by the Commission on occupational medical services, and a first meeting of experts held. It is anticipated that further meetings will be necessary to formulate clear proposals.

Action 12. Special Monitoring. In the last decade a significant number of chemical accidents, which may be considered as major accidents, have occurred both within the Community and in other countries.

The Flixborough, Seveso and Manfredonia accidents in the past five years have finally prompted not only the Member States but also the Community to act.

The proposal for a Council Directive on the risk of major accidents in certain industrial activities (OJ C 212 of 24.8.1979) is aimed at preventing such accidents and at reducing their consequences when they occur.

A major accident is defined as:

A major emission, fire or explosion involving one or more dangerous substances, resulting from the uncontrolled development of an industrial activity, which could constitute a serious risk, immediate or delayed, for workers, the neighbouring population and the environment.

The proposal requires, in general, for industrial activities, or storage which involve dangerous substances, and which are likely to lead to serious consequences in the case of an accident, that:

- a safety report be drawn up,
- workers be informed, equipped and trained,
- safety drills be organized,
- the neighbouring population be informed and an emergency plan established.

In addition when certain particularly toxic, persistent exploding or flammable substances are present in quantities exceeding certain limits then notification with a more substantial dossier is compulsory. Such a dossier is also necessary if the substances fall within certain criteria of toxicity.

Member States are to inform immediately the Commission of any major accidents occurring on their territory; the Commission is to set up a data bank which will contain information:

- on the major accidents which have occurred;
- on the risks of major accidents considered by type of industrial activity;
- on the hazards which might arise in the case of major accidents;
- on the appropriate measures for reducing the risks.

Action 13. Inspection by public authorities. The Commission is planning a joint study together with the International Labour Office and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Action 14. Schemes for information to particular categories of workers. This action has not been developed in view of the manpower shortage.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the very modest staff means available to the Commission for the implementation of this action programme, several important initiatives have been undertaken, and a number of detailed proposals have been submitted to the Council. The approval of these proposals by the Council will help to achieve a better and more harmonized protection of the safety and health of workers at Community level.