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PRESS RELEASE

Alignment of rules concerning dangerous substances

The EEC Commission has forwarded to the Council two proposed directives on the approximation of laws and regulations concerning dangerous substances, their classification, labelling and packaging.

One is an outline directive - the first step towards the elimination of disparities between national rules concerning dangerous chemical substances. It gives a list of these substances and preparations, which Member States must allow to be imported if they conform with Community rules. Two classes of substances or preparations are defined as dangerous. The first are explosive or inflammable, and the second toxic, noxious, corrosive or irritant. The directive also indicates how the approximation is to be implemented by further directives and contains provisions on co-operation between the Member States in this field. In particular it provides for procedure by which the Commission will intervene to resolve any divergences between Member States as to the conformity of the dangerous substances or preparations with Community requirements. The directive further provides for a procedure for the revision of the provisions on these substances and preparations in the light of scientific and technical advances.

The second directive is the first implementing one pursuant to the outline directive. It deals with dangerous substances and their classification. It also contains provisions on packaging and labelling.

These two directives serve two aims of the Rome Treaty: the protection of the life and health of the population, and especially of those who handle dangerous substances in the course of their work, and the free movement of these substances within the European Community.

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