



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 26 February 2013

Health and Safety: Commission proposes to improve workers' protection against exposure to hazardous chemicals

The European Commission has proposed to better protect workers from risks linked to exposure to chemicals at the workplace. In particular, the Commission has proposed to amend five existing EU health and safety Directives on protection of workers from exposure to harmful chemicals to align them with the latest rules on classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals ([Regulation \(EC\) 1272/2008](#)). The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the EU's Council of Ministers for adoption.

The proposal would ensure that manufacturers and suppliers of chemical substances and mixtures would have to provide harmonised labelling information on hazard classification, alerting the user to the presence of hazardous chemicals, the need to avoid exposure and the associated risks. Employers use this information when carrying out workplace risk assessments. This allows employers to put in place appropriate risk management measures to protect workers' health and safety, such as process enclosure, ventilation systems and the use of personal protective equipment. Every day millions of EU workers are potentially exposed to hazardous chemicals in a wide range of employment sectors including manufacturing and service industries, agriculture, health care and education.

The proposal has been the subject of two rounds of consultation of employer and trade union representatives at EU level as well as discussions in the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSHW).

Background

The classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures regulation, Regulation (EC) 1272/2008, implements the United Nations Globally Harmonised System for the harmonised classification of hazardous chemicals. It foresees the information to users about the related health hazards by means of harmonised communication elements, like pictograms and hazard and precautionary statements on packaging labels, and safety data sheets. It entered into force in January 2009.

The five Occupational Safety and Health Directives that would be amended by this proposal ([92/58/EEC](#), [92/85/EEC](#), [94/33/EC](#), [98/24/EC](#) and [2004/37/EC](#)) all currently refer to existing EU chemical classification and labelling legislation that will be repealed on 1 June 2015 in accordance with Regulation (EC) 1272/2008.

For more information

László Andor's website: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/index_en.htm

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