

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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GUIDELINES FOR A COMMUNITY PROGRAMME  
FOR  
SAFETY, HYGIENE AND HEALTH PROTECTION AT WORK

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## I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 For several years the Community has recorded annually nearly a hundred thousand deaths and more than twelve million injured in accidents of all types. The human consequences are incalculable, but it is worth indicating that the total annual cost of these accidents in economic terms, that is both the direct and the indirect cost, amounts to more than fifteen thousand million units of account (1).

Industrial accidents, including occupational diseases, although not the major sector of risk as far as fatal accidents are concerned (2), represented the largest group of accidents taken as a whole (3) and therefore constitute a priority area for Community concern. The overall situation in this sector has not significantly improved over recent years, despite the considerable effort that has been made in the field of technical accident prevention. A decrease in the number of accidents in one year is often compensated by subsequent increases. A decrease in one country or sector is not necessarily reflected elsewhere. A decrease in number can also coincide with an increase in the severity of accidents. It must furthermore be emphasised that the very nature of work, whether in industry, commerce or elsewhere, is in constant rapid evolution, with new techniques and materials being introduced, bringing with them new hazards and problems, but also, in some cases, the potential for improved accident prevention.

Faced with this situation, and particularly conscious of the social implications, the Commission considers that it must significantly expand preventive action at the Community level, particularly in the field of accidents connected with work. Such action is well founded in the EEC Treaty, as the improvement of work safety contributes in a significant way towards the improvement of living and working conditions, which is an essential objective of the Community.

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- (1) Estimate made by a department of the Commission
  - (2) As far as fatal accidents are concerned, taking each major sector of risk in round figures, 50% are due to road traffic, 30% to accidents "at home" or to leisure activities, and 20%, including vocational diseases, are industrial accidents.
  - (3) In Germany, for instance, the total number of accidents are grouped as follows: more than 30% at work, about 15% for each of the 3 groups, road traffic, "at home", and leisure, and 25% in various other circumstances.

2 The guidelines, which are discussed in Part II of this paper, and which are inspired by the above considerations, are a first response to the Council Resolution of 21 January 1974 (1) concerning a social action programme, which lays down as a priority objective the setting-up of an initial action programme on hygiene, safety at work, the health of workers, and the improved organisation of tasks.

These guidelines are also a response to chapter 4, of title II, of the second part of the Community's action programme on the Environment, which was approved by the Council on 22 November 1973 (2).

3 A series of consultative meetings were held on 8 May, 10 May and 11 November 1974 with governmental experts and representatives of employers' and workers' organisations.

4 The guidelines as a whole constitute a framework indicating, on the one hand, the objectives to be pursued and, on the other hand, the actions described in general terms for attaining each objective. The preparation and implementation of activities will be undertaken by the Commission in collaboration especially with the Tripartite "Advisory Committee for safety, hygiene and health protection at work" set up by the Council Decision of 27 June 1974 (3) for this very purpose. When nominations to the Committee are complete, a first meeting will be held as soon as possible. A number of specific themes of activity have, in the meantime, already been suggested by certain member governments and are included in annex.

5 Objective 1 of the guidelines is a response to the continuous need to adapt technical regulations for accident prevention to the rapid evolution of technology.

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(1) O.J. No C 13 of 12 February 1974

(2) O.J. No C 112 of 20 December 1974

(3) O.J. No L 185 of 9 June 1974.

The continuing level of accidents at work, referred to in paragraph 1, has obliged the Commission to devote increased attention to methods which will deal with the problem in "depth", to look particularly at the training of persons employed, and at human attitudes. Objectives 2,3,4,5, and 6 have been framed with this in mind.

Objective 7 concerns the level of the undertaking itself, where specific action is equally essential.

Objective 8, in its entirety, together with a number of actions mentioned elsewhere, represent a continuation of certain current activities which find their logical place within the overall framework of this programme.

Obviously, where the question arises, directly or indirectly, of an approximation or harmonisation between Member States, this must be dealt with in a way which ensures progress, and not in a way that consolidates the status quo. Equally in the case of concertation between Member States, in no way should this delay any initiative on their part, or reduce their responsibility. Co-ordination and collaboration are intended to encourage the development of preventive action whilst making the most economic use of the means available.

7 For the implementation of these guidelines the Commission intends, as far as possible, to carry out this co-ordination at a Community level, and where appropriate in collaboration with other international bodies.

8 These guidelines concern safety, hygiene and industrial medicine in the accepted meaning of the words. These are, however, aspects of wider concepts, which have been brought more and more to the forefront by the Commission, and by others. These include the humanisation of work and the improved organisation of tasks. Such concepts will be the subject of a communication from the Commission during 1975, and have already been taken up, in another context, in the framework of the 3rd ECSC Social Research Programme on "Ergonomics and Rehabilitation".

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The guidelines are set out below in part II. Comments are given on each objective and its associated actions.

II OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: to promote concerted action and consultation between Member States with respect to regulations and monitoring procedures

- Whenever a major problem arises in a Member State or new measures are envisaged,

action a): Communication to the Commission which shall organise an exchange of views or concertation between the Member States, and

action b): where appropriate, preparation of Community measures to encourage progress.

- For problems and reforms with a Community interest, the same action can be taken at the initiative of the Commission.

Comments

The aim is to attempt to resolve certain problems "a priori" with the necessary degree of flexibility, thereby avoiding the more lengthy concertation procedures "a posteriori".

Action a) will give Member States the opportunity, in the context of problems which have to be solved, to obtain information to concert efforts, and to shape their ideas. Experience has shown that such action even if very informal is valuable both in the short and in the long term.

Action b) allows for the extension, where necessary, of the actions under a) into more formal procedures.

OBJECTIVE 2: To develop collaboration between the relevant bodies in the Member States which promote research into preventive measures, with a view to increasing the efficiency of available resources

Action a): Mutual information on research projects in progress and exchange of results.

Action b): Co-ordination or joint organisation of future research in all appropriate cases.

Action c): Study and implementation of methods to improve information for those particularly involved, including the practitioners.

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Comments

The intention is, by collaboration between organisations promoting research, to achieve more rational use of the means available. It has been found by experience that research into prevention is done, in some cases, in a scattered fashion.

Action a) should be a beginning in showing the present state of affairs.

Action b) aims at regular, step-by-step planning between the organisations in the Member States promoting research, to exclude duplication and to allow a certain division of work.

These two actions have an appreciable economic value; it is foreseen that they will, at the same time, lead to a particular Community line of thinking, not only in the field of research, but equally in that of prevention.

Action c) takes account of the fact that in certain cases research results are only received after a considerable delay by those who have to consider them or to put them into practice.

OBJECTIVE 3: To improve statistics on occupational accidents and diseases to assist accident prevention policies

Action a): Study of the situation and definition of essential requirements.

Action b): Carrying out Community surveys in specific fields.

Action c): Collection of harmonised statistics.

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Comments

The statistics which are at present available do not provide a valid basis for defining a detailed prevention policy at either a national or a Community level.

Action a) is an important study subject. Given that action c) is a long term goal, action b) provides for surveys which, on the one hand, have the aim of developing better methods, and, on the other hand, of complementing certain activities arising from the present programme.

The actions envisaged under Objective 3 will incorporate the preparatory work already undertaken in the context of the Action III of the Social Action Programme on "Statistical surveys on industrial accidents and safety".

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OBJECTIVE 4: To develop training for safety and health protection in the various branches of education and at the various educational levels

Action a). Exchange of experience.

Action b): Integration, of basic knowledge on safety and health into educational and training courses at the various levels and in the different branches.

Action c): Definition of the specific requirements for specific professions or tasks.

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Comments

In this case it is a question of an extremely important long-term investment. The basic aim in initiating these actions is to achieve effective collaboration at a Community level, in particular between the Ministries of employment (the matter) and the Ministries of education (the methods).

Action a) is a starting point to prove that this is possible, for there have already been some limited achievements.

Action b) consists of several stages:

- study of the minimum necessary material,
- choice of appropriate methods.

This is to be done stage by stage by branch and level of education priority being given to technical education.

The professions or tasks mentioned in action c) are, for example industrial doctors, architects, safety engineers, instructors.

The actions envisaged under Objective 4 and 5 (see following page) can be carried out in collaboration with the new European Centre for Vocational Training, set up by Regulation 337/75 (EEC) of 10 February 1975.

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OBJECTIVE 5: To utilize audio-visual information methods to improve the provision of information for those sectors of the population especially affected

- use of television and of radio

Action a): Exchange of experience and

Action b): development of the use of television and creation of joint productions.

- use of film and slides with sound tracks for accident prevention purposes

Action c): setting up a permanent Community documentation system (1).

Action d): promotion of co-productions (2).

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Comments

The use of television and radio is certainly one of the most important and effective means of informing (and of training) certain sectors of the population. Here the question is one of organising at Community level, collaboration between, in particular, Ministries of employment (the matter) and the authorities responsible for T.V. and radio (the methods).

Action a) is a start to show what has been done up to now.

Action b) includes progressively

- the identification of the groups to be reached and the material appropriate for each group,
- the choice of methods of presentation.

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(1) Preparatory work is already well in hand.

(2) A first project, on the subject of manual handling, is in hand.

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In the practical field, the Commission intends to promote the periodic planning of transmissions and to encourage joint productions (co-ordination - exchange - distribution).

Action c) involves setting up an index system of recent audio-visual methods, which could be interchangeable between countries.

Action d) includes the joint production of a film which is being prepared, and shows convincing economic aspects.

Other co-productions are envisaged for the future.

OBJECTIVE 6: To promote the participation of both sides of industry in preventive action at the national level, within industrial branches and undertakings

Action a): Comparative studies of the situations obtaining in the Member States.

Action b): Working out a Community concept for this form of participation whilst maintaining the possibility of improvements.

Action c): Community measures to be proposed, where appropriate.

Comments

Prevention must follow the general trend towards democratisation both for reasons of principle and of effectiveness.

Action a) should demonstrate comparatively what exists at present, and what is lacking, e.g. structures and collective agreements.

Given that in the Member States there are several differences in this area (between the partners concerning the structures and/or their level and their competence), a major collective effort is required to move towards a Community concept. This work of study and of development (action b) is the necessary basis for the introduction of concrete proposals (action c).

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OBJECTIVE 7: To promote safety and health protection within undertakings

Action a): Working out a Community concept for safety services (1) and medical services; measures to be proposed.

Action b): Working out a Community concept as regards the essential requirements for jobs and work-places; measures to be proposed.

Action c): Drawing up a Community instrument for industrial warning signs in the undertaking (2).

Action d): To develop training in safety for certain groups of personnel in undertakings.

(see also OBJECTIVE 6 as regards the undertaking).

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Comments

Action a) will continue and complete work in hand at the Community level, (taking into account the collaboration established with other international organizations in these fields).

Action b) has, as its aim, the preparation of a generally acceptable catalogue of essential requirements for safety and hygiene, applicable in particular to the conception of new jobs and work-places.

Action c) covers the activities, now being completed of a working group. This group has prepared, for a series of circumstances, uniform warning signs which have no text. It should be noted that this uniformity is of great importance for workers, particularly migrant workers, and also that the work is being done in collaboration with the International Standards Organisation (I.S.O.). The choice of an instrument to bring these into use has yet to be made.

Action d) refers to certain categories of workers, such as, safety delegates, representatives of personnel, and white collar workers.

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(1) Preparatory work is already in progress.

(2) Preparatory work is already in the advanced stage.

OBJECTIVE 8: To deal with the particular problems affecting certain sectors and certain categories of workers

Action a): Preparation and implementation of European codes of safety and hygiene.

Action b): Development and dissemination of knowledge on safety and health protection for migrant workers (1).

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Comments

Action a) As an example a working group composed of governmental experts has prepared draft rules for the utilisation of certain machines in the agricultural sector. This work should be continued in collaboration with the social partners in the framework of the Joint Committee on social problems for farm workers and at an appropriate moment should be published in the form of a "European Code". Other activities on a sectoral basis will be started or continued, in collaboration with the existing and envisaged Joint Committees.

Action b) After making a synthesis of some ten comparative case studies, which have already been completed, the Commission will be in a position to give guidance on the need to make a very careful comparison between accidents occurring to migrant workers and those which occur to nationals.

A concrete form of activity would be to organise a symposium, allowing exchanges of experience, particularly on training of migrant workers in safety and health. It should be noted that this very limited action should be seen in the wider context of the action programme on migrant workers submitted to the Council in December 1974.

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(1) Preparatory work is in progress.

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Orig.: F

ANNEXINITIAL LIST OF SPECIFIC THEMES ALREADY  
SUGGESTED BY CERTAIN MEMBER GOVERNMENTS

- Difficult and arduous man-handling jobs and other risks for the back
  - dangerous products: - positive list
    - risks for workers and the public due to the operation of large installations where dangerous substances are produced or stored
  - use of benzene in industry
  - isolated work (carried out alone or away from others)
  - preventive measures in the event of fire
  - risks from the use of vinyl chloride.
  
  - Noise, particularly in the work environment
  - vibrations
  - dust
  - gases and vapours
  - radiations other than ionizing radiations.
  
  - Monitoring of asbestos in the work environment
  - silicosis
  - harmonization of medical records to facilitate epidemiological research in the Community
  - definition and harmonization of criteria for the diagnosis of disease or abnormality.
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F I C H E F I N A N C I E R E

Orientations pour un programme communautaire concernant la sécurité, l'hygiène et la protection de la santé sur le lieu de travail.

## 1. " Protection de la santé sur les lieux de travail "

Exercice 1975 ( Poste 3551 )	162.000 u.c. (obtenues)
Exercice 1976 ( Poste 3551 )	200.000 u.c. (demandées)
(Chapitre 98 )	300.000 u.c. (demandées)
Exercice 1977 en cours de préparation.	

L'entrée en fonction du Comité Consultatif et la mise en oeuvre du programme vont donner un plein essor aux actions concernant la protection de la santé sur les lieux de travail. Comme les actions à entreprendre seront définies seulement au cours de l'année 1975, un crédit limité est inscrit au poste 3551 en 1975. Dans les années suivantes les activités devraient se développer à un rythme croissant.

## 2. " Comité Consultatif pour la sécurité, l'hygiène et la protection de la santé sur le lieu de travail ".

Exercice 1975 ( Poste 2531 )	36.000 u.c. (obtenues)
Exercice 1976 ( Poste 2531 )	100.000 u.c. (demandées)
Exercice 1977 ( Poste 2531 )	en cours de préparation.

La première réunion du Comité devait avoir lieu au cours du premier trimestre de 1975. Dès lors, ses groupes de travail commenceront à fonctionner. A ce commencement d'action, en 1975, doit suivre un plein développement de l'activité selon un rythme comparable à celui de l'Organe Permanent, qui justifierait un fort accroissement des crédits en 1976 et 1977.