

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(76) 132 final
Brussels, 2 April 1976

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

on the Harmonisation of the Legal and Administrative
Regulations of the Member States on the Provision of
Safety Information at the Workplace

(submitted to the Council by the Commission)

COM(76) 132 final

P r e a m b l e

I. General

1. Safety signs at work places and immediately around them are intended to have the same effect on the work process as that of road signs on traffic : they indicate what is mandatory and what is forbidden, give warnings of dangers, and provide information and instructions.

Since traffic signs, which have by now largely been standardised, are essential to survival, they are now generally known and recognised. They are also used at work places, both inside and outside buildings, where there is a need to control a situation which is essentially similar to road traffic, but they are naturally not sufficient to provide information covering the wide variety of risk situations arising at the work place.

2. This area is covered only to a very limited extent by national regulations, administrative measures being far more frequent. In all Member States it is an area in which standardisation has been more or less expected **slow-moving negotiations in the relevant Committee of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), no encouragement has been forthcoming. It has thus developed in differing national directions and remained relatively nugatory.**
3. Large firms have often taken to producing their own signs, with the result that there are wide differences in the shape, colour and symbol of the signs used for any given purpose. In order to avoid misunderstandings of the message on these signs, it has often proved necessary to add a supplementary sign giving the meaning of the symbol in the local language.

4. The result of this development is that the sign manufacturers currently offer an extraordinarily varied range of signs on the national and international markets, and that this range is growing larger every day. In most cases these various signs are used with the best intentions, but without the users being aware that many of them cannot be understood either by the workers, who have at least been given a certain amount of information, or even less by the general public.
5. The objective of the signs is that one glance should be sufficient to indicate what must or must not be done. In the present situation this objective is not being met. The difficulties are considerable enough for workers if they change jobs within their own country, as in the new job there may be signs relating to a risk situation which are completely different from those used in the previous job for the same risk situation. During the adaptation period there is a considerable risk of confusion, which may result in an accident.

Migrant workers have special and additional difficulties. Not only are warning signs often a completely new phenomenon to them, but also they are not able to understand the text in the language of the country they have moved to. Of course, the practice in many cases is to append the text to the safety signs in several languages, but even then it takes some time before the correct language is found and read and the meaning of the sign grasped.

II. Solution through Harmonisation

As a result of the above it appears necessary to find a solution for this area which

- a) it will be obligatory to apply in all Member States,
- b) is as simple and striking as possible in design and makes the least possible use of texts.

Only in this way does it appear possible to make the urgent provision of safety information clear and comprehensible both for the workers and for the general public who frequently come into contact with the risks of a

working situation. Examples of such contact are building sites in towns, work carried out on houses, risks in undertakings open to the public or intended for public presentations (department stores, restaurants, theatres, etc.). Furthermore the public encounters these dangers not only in their home country but also, inevitably with our type of Community, as workers or tourists in many different Member States.

All these can only be achieved if - as provided for in the **Proposal/Directive** - **for a** there is total harmonisation under Article 100 of the Treaty of the regulations laying down the obligation to provide safety information at the workplace by analogous provisions to those made for **placing on the market and transportation of dangerous substances and preparations.**

III. Explanatory Remarks on the Individual Provisions of the **Proposal/ Directive** **for a**

Broadly speaking, the definition of the safety colours and safety signs follows the new ISO Standards, the drafting of which was significantly influenced by the Commission's departments. Allowance was made in drafting for the most recent international experience gained with safety signs, in particular in undertakings with workers from different foreign countries. Some of the colours, shapes and symbols proposed may be regarded as recognised by convention.

Annex I contains the basic principles governing the provision of information.

Annex II contains the signs which are nowadays essential and which under all circumstances will be adequately understood without the addition of wording. They may be the basis for further developments.

Rapid adaptation to further development in the methods used to provide information and in information requirements should be in the hands of a special Committee.

IV. Preparation of the Proposal for a Directive

The draft Directive has been prepared together with experts of the national governments, and is in accordance with their expressed views.

The Advisory Committee for Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work has given its approval.

V. Consultation of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee

Since implementation of the provisions contained in the **proposal / directive** ^{for a} will result in changes to the legal provisions for all the Member States, under Article 100, Section 2 of the EEC Treaty an Opinion is required from both bodies.

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,
and in particular Article 100 thereof,

Having regard to the Proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas, in its Resolution of 21 January 1974 concerning a social action programme, the Council affirmed the need to improve safety and protection of health in places of work, as part of the improvement of living and working conditions;

Whereas the guidelines for a Community programme of safety, hygiene and protection of health in places of work, decided on by the Commission on 8 April 1975 expressly refer in Objective 7 to the promotion of safety and protection of health in undertakings and also specifically propose the creation of a Community instrument to identify the dangers;

Whereas the freedom of movement of persons and services has considerably increased the risk of accidents of work and occupational diseases, in particular because of the differences in the organisation of work within the Member States, the different languages and the resulting misunderstandings and errors; whereas these difficulties, which constitute an obstacle to the functioning of the Common Market, can be reduced by the introduction of a Community system of safety signs;

Whereas these signs concern not only internal places of work but also external ones; Whereas, although the proposed measures are aimed at workers, they also considerably affect third parties with access to the works who thus also run the risk of accident and who, like the workers, may be of different nationalities;

Whereas a Community system of safety signs can only be effective if it is ensured by means of unified legal provisions, and if the presentation of the signs is as simple and striking as possible and makes the minimum use of texts; whereas its effectiveness also requires that these concerned receive full and repeated instruction thereon in good time;

Whereas technical progress and the future development of international methods of signposting require that the safety signs contained in the Annexes to this Directive are brought up to date without delay; whereas in order to facilitate the carrying out of the necessary measures, the close collaboration between the Member States and the Commission should be ensured by the setting up of a special committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

1. This Directive shall cover the system of safety signs in places of work for the protection of workers and third parties.
2. This Directive shall not apply to
 - a) signs used in rail, road, inland waterway, marine or air transport;
 - b) signs prescribed for use when placing of dangerous materials and products on the market.

Article 2

1. For the purposes of this Directive :
 - a) System of safety signs
means an indication, referring to a specific object or a specific situation, which gives information relating to safety by means of a colour or a safety sign;
 - b) Safety colour
means a colour to which a specific meaning is assigned with regard to safety;
 - c) Contrasting colour
means a colour which by way of contrast to a safety colour, provides supplementary information;
 - d) Safety sign
means a sign which through the combination of geometrical shape, colour and symbol gives specific information relating to safety;
 - e) Prohibition sign
means a safety sign which forbids a action which could cause danger;
 - f) Warning sign
means a safety sign which warns of a danger;

g) Mandatory sign

means a safety sign which prescribes a specific action;

h) Emergency sign

means a safety sign which in the event of danger indicates an emergency exit, the way to a first aid post or the location of a rescue appliance;

i) Information sign

means a safety sign giving other information relating to safety than that referred to in paragraphs e) to h);

k) Supplementary sign

means a safety sign which is used only in conjunction with a safety sign referred to in paragraphs e) to h) and which provides supplementary information;

l) Symbol

means a symbol which describes a specific situation and which is used on one of the safety signs referred to in paragraphs e) to h).

2. The meaning and application of the safety and contrast colours, and the shape, design and meaning of the safety signs are laid down in Annex I.

Article 3

Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that

- the system of safety signs in all places of work conforms to the principles laid down in Annex I;
- only the safety signs listed in Annex II are used to indicate dangerous situations and to provide the information therein specified;
- the signs applicable to road traffic are used to control internal works traffic.

Article 4

Any amendments required to adapt the Annexes I and II hereto to technical progress and the future development of international methods of signposting shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 6.

Article 5

1. A Committee is hereby set up and shall consist of representatives of the Member States a representative of the Commission as Chairman.
2. The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

Article 6

1. Where the procedure laid down in this Article is to be followed, the matter shall be referred to the Committee by its Chairman, either on his own initiative or at the request of a representative of a Member State.
2. The representative of the Commission shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall give its Opinion on that draft within a time limit set by the Chairman having regard to the urgency of the matter. Opinions shall be delivered by a majority of votes, the votes of the Member States being weighted as provided in Article 148(2) of the Treaty. The Chairman shall not vote.
3. a) Where the measures envisaged are in accordance with the Opinion of the Committee, the Commission shall adopt them.
b) Where the measures envisaged are not in accordance with the Opinion of the Committee, or if no opinion is delivered, the Commission shall without delay submit to the Council a proposal on the measures to be taken. The Council shall act by a qualified majority.

- c) If within three months of the proposal being submitted to it, the Council has not acted, the proposed measures shall be adopted by the Commission.

Article 7

1. Member States shall implement the necessary provisions for compliance with this Directive within 18 months of its notification and shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.
2. Member States shall ensure that the text of national legislation which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive is communicated to the Commission.

Article 8

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Basic principles of the system of safety signs.

1. General

- 1.1. The objective of the system of safety signs is to draw attention immediately and unambiguously to objects and situations capable of causing specific dangers.
- 1.2. Under no circumstances is the system of safety signs a substitute for the requisite protective measures.
- 1.3. The system of safety signs may be used only to give information related to safety.
- 1.4. The effectiveness of the system of safety signs is vitally dependent on full and constantly repeated instruction of all persons likely to benefit therefrom.

2. Safety colours and contrasting colours

2.1. Meaning of

Table 1

Safety colour	Meaning or purpose	Examples of use
Red	Stop	Stop signs
	Prohibition	Emergency shutdown devices Prohibition signs

	This colour is also used to identify fire-fighting material.	
Yellow	Caution! Possible danger	Identification of dangers (fire, explosion, radiation, chemical hazards, etc.) Identification of thresholds, dangerous passages, obstacles.
Green	No danger First aid	Identification of emergency routes and emergency exits Safety showers First aid stations and rescue points
Blue*	Mandatory signs Information	Obligation to wear individual safety equipment Location of telephone

* Counts as a safety colour only when used in conjunction with symbol or text on mandatory

sign or information sign bearing instructions relating to technical prevention.




2.2. Contrasting colours and symbol colours

Table 2

Safety colour	Contrasting colour	Symbol colour
red	white	black
yellow	black	black
green	white	white
blue	white	white




3. Shape and meaning of safety signs

Table 3

Shape	Meaning
	Mandatory and prohibition signs
	Warning signs
	Emergency, information and supplementary signs

4. Combinations of form and colour and their meanings for signs

Table 4

Shape \ Colours			
Red	Prohibition		Fire-fighting equipment.
Yellow		Caution, possible danger.	
Green			No danger. Rescue equipment.
Blue	Directive		Information or instruction.

5. Design of safety signs

5.1. Prohibition signs

Background : white; symbol or wording : black.

The safety colour red must appear around the edge and in a transverse bar and must cover at least 35 % of the surface of the sign.

5.2. Warning, mandatory, emergency and information signs

Background : safety colour; symbol or text : contrasting colour.

A yellow triangle must have a black edge.

The safety colour must cover at least 50% of the surface of the sign.

5.3. Supplementary signs

Background : white; wording : black;

or

background : safety colour; wording : contrasting colour.

5.4. Symbols

The design must be as simple as possible and details not essential to comprehension should be deleted.

6. Dimensions and colour values of the safety signs

The dimensions of the sign and the measurement of the distance from which it is visible, and the colour values of the material to be used, should be based on international standards.

7. Yellow/black danger identification



(Proportion of safety colour at least 50%)

Identification of permanent risk locations such as

locations where there is a risk of collision, falling, stumbling or of falling loads.

Steps, holes in floors, etc.

SÆRLIG SIKKERHEDSSKILTNING
BESONDERE SICHERHEITSKENNZEICHNUNG
SPECIAL SAFETY INFORMATION

SIGNALISATION PARTICULIERE DE SECURITE
SEGNALI PARTICOLARI DI SICUREZZA
BEZONDERE VEILIGHEIDSSIGNALERING

1. Forbudeskilte
 Panneaux d'interdiction

Verbotszeichen
 Cartelli segnalatori di divieto

Prohibition signs
 Verbodsborden



Rygning forbudt
 Rauchen verboten
 No smoking
 Defense de fumer
 Vietato fumare
 Verboden te roken



Rygning og åben ild forbudt
 Feuer, offenes Licht und Rauchen verboten
 Smoking and naked flames forbidden
 Flamme nue interdite et defense de fumer
 Vietato fumare o usare flammè libere
 Vuur, open vlam en roken verboden



Ingen adgang for fodgængere
 Für Fussgänger verboten
 Pedestrians forbidden
 Interdit aux pietons
 Vietato ai pedoni
 Verboden voor voetgangers



Sluk ikke med vand
 Verbot mit Wasser zu löschen
 Do not extinguish with water
 Defense d'êteindre avec de l'eau
 Divieto di usare acqua per spegnere incendi
 Verboden met water te blussen



Ikke drikkevand
 Verbot dieses Wasser zu trinken
 No drinking water
 Eau non potable
 Acqua non potabile
 Verboden water te drinken

2. Advarselsskilte
Panneaux d'avertissement

Warnzeichen
Cartelli segnalatori di
pericolo

Warning signs
Waarschuwingsborden



Brandfarlige stoffer
Warnung vor feuergefähr-
lichen Stoffen
Inflammable matter
Matières inflammables
Materiale infiammabile
Ontvlambare stoffen



Eksplodingsfarlige stoffer
Warnung vor Explosivstoffen
Explosive matter
Matières explosives
Materiale esplosivo
Explosieve stoffen



Giftige stoffer
Warnung vor giftigen Stoffen
Toxic matter
Matières toxiques
Sostanze velenose
Giftige stoffen



Ætsende stoffer
Warnung vor ätzenden Stoffen
Corrosive matter
Matières corrosives
Sostanze corrosive
Bijtende stoffen



Ioniserende stråling
Radioaktivitet/Røntgenstråling
Warnung vor radioaktiven Stoffen
oder ionisierenden Strahlen
Radioactive matter
Matières radioactives
Radiazioni pericolose
Radioaktieve stoffen



Kran i arbejde
Warnung vor schwebender Last
Beware, overhead load
Charges suspendues
Attenzione ai carichi sospesi
Hangende lasten



Pas på kørende trafik
Warnung vor Flurförderzeugen
Beware, industrial trucks
Charicots de manutention
Carrelli di movimentazione
Transportvoertuigen



Farlig elektrisk spænding
Warnung vor gefährlicher
elektrischer Spannung
Danger high tension
Danger électrique
Alta tensione, pericolo di morte
Gevaar voor hoge elektrische
spænding



Giv agt
Warnung vor einer Gefahrstelle
General danger
Danger général
Pericolo generico
Gevaar

3. Påbudsskilte
Panneaux d'obligation

Gebotszeichen
Cartelli segnalatori di
obbligo

Mandatory signs
Gebodsborden



Øjenværn påbudt
Augenschutz tragen
Eye protection must be worn
Protection obligatoire de
la vue
Protezione degli occhi
Oogbescherming verplicht

Hovedværn påbudt
Schutzhelm tragen
Safety helmet must be worn
Protection obligatoire de
la tête
Casco di protezione
Veiligheidshelm verplicht

Høreværn påbudt
Gehörschutz tragen
Ear protection must be worn
Protection obligatoire de
ouïe
Protezione dell'udito
Gehoorsbescherming verplicht



Åndedrætsværn påbudt
Atenschutz tragen
Respiratory equipment must
be used
Protection obligatoire des
voies respiratoires
Protezione vie respiratorie
Adembescherming verplicht

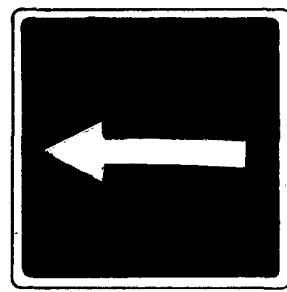
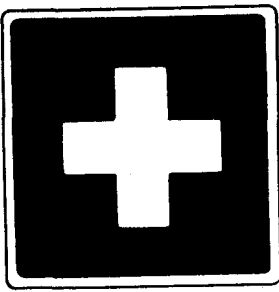
Fodværn påbudt
Schutzschuhe tragen
Safety boots must be worn
Protection obligatoire
des pieds
Calzature di sicurezza
Veiligheidsschoenen
verplicht

Beskyttelsehandsker påbudt
Schutzhandschuhe tragen
Safety gloves must be worn
Protection obligatoire des
mains
Guanti di protezione
Veiligheidshandschoenen
verplicht

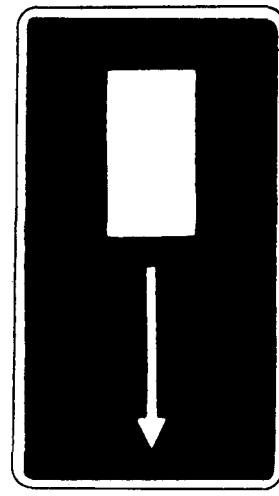
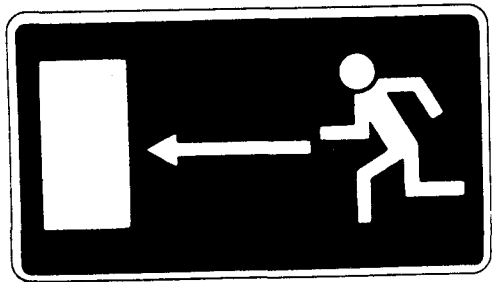
4. Nødhjælpsskilte
Premiers secours et
évacuation

Rettungszeichen
Cartelli indicatori
"pronto soccorso"

Emergency signs
Redding en eerste hulp



Første hjælp
Hinweis auf "Erste Hilfe"
First aid post
Poste premiers secours
Pronto soccorso
Eerste hulp-post



Retningsangivelse til nødudgang
Fluchtweg (Richtungsangabe für Fluchtweg)
Emergency exit to the left
Issue de secours vers la gauche
Uscita d'emergenza a sinistra
Nooduitgang naar links

Nødudgang
(anbringes over udgangen)
Fluchtweg
(über dem Fluchtausgang anzubringen)
Emergency exit
(to be placed above the exit)
Sortie de secours
(à placer au-dessus de la sortie)
Uscita d'emergenza
(da collocare sopra l'uscita)
Nooduitgang
(te plaatsen boven de uitgang)