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**21st Annual activity report**

**of the**

**Advisory Committee on  
Safety, Hygiene and  
Health Protection at Work**

**1996**

(presented by the Commission)

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## **1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **1.1 Origins, competence, remit**

In view of the need to establish a standing body to assist the Commission in the preparation and implementation of activities concerned with safety, hygiene and health protection at work, and to facilitate cooperation between national administrations, trade unions and employers' organisations, the Council of the European Communities, by its Decision of 27 June 1974 (74/325/EEC), set up an Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work.

The main tasks of the Committee are (Article 2(2) of the Decision):

- a) to conduct, on the basis of information available to it, exchanges of views and experience regarding existing or planned rules and regulations;
- b) to contribute towards the development of a common approach to problems encountered in the fields of safety, hygiene and health protection at work, and towards the choice of Community priorities as well as the measures necessary for implementing them;
- c) to draw the Commission's attention to areas in which there is an apparent need for the acquisition of new knowledge and for the implementation of appropriate educational and research projects;
- d) to define, within the framework of Community action programmes, and in cooperation with the Mines Safety and Health Commission:
  - the criteria and aims underpinning action to combat the risk of accidents at work and health hazards within the working environment;
  - the methods whereby companies and their employees can evaluate and improve the level of protection;
- e) to contribute towards keeping national administrations, trade unions and employers' organisations informed of Community measures in order to facilitate their cooperation and to encourage initiatives promoted by them with a view to exchanging experience and laying down codes of practice.

## 1.2 Structure, procedure

The Committee is a tripartite body made up of full members comprising, for each Member State, two representatives of the Government, two representatives of trade unions and two representatives of employers' organisations. An alternate member is appointed for each full member. The full members and alternate members of the Committee are appointed by the Council, which publishes the list of members in the Official Journal of the European Communities, for information purposes.

The list of members in 1996 is contained in Annex B.

The Committee is chaired by a Member of the Commission or, where he or she is prevented from so doing, by a designated Commission official.

The Committee may set up working groups chaired by a Committee member. These groups are required to present the results of their activities in the form of a report at a meeting of the Committee.

The Commission provides secretarial services for the Committee and the working groups. The secretariat comes under Directorate-General V (Unit V/F/4).

The Committee produces an annual report on its activities, which the Commission forwards to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Opinions of the Committee are delivered by an absolute majority of the votes validly cast. An opinion delivered by the Committee is valid when two-thirds of its members are present.

The rules of procedure adopted by the Committee enter into force after the Council, having received an opinion from the Commission, has given its approval.

The representatives of the Governments, trade unions and employers' organisations are organised in three separate interest groups, each of which appoints a spokesperson. The spokespersons attend the meetings of their interest group and of the Committee, where they are entitled to speak on behalf of their group.

Contact between the members of the workers' interest group is maintained through the trade-union organisation at Community level designated by the interest group, while the members of the employers' interest group keep in touch through a member of the Committee belonging to the employers' organisation at Community level designated by the interest group. Contact between the members of the governmental interest group is maintained through a member of the Committee representing the Government whose country holds the Council Presidency.

## 2. ACTIVITIES IN 1996

In 1996, the Committee, chaired by the Director-General of DG V, met on two occasions, in Luxembourg in May and in Dublin in November at the invitation of the Irish Presidency. Mrs Fitzgerald, Irish Minister for labour affairs, addressed the Committee in the presence of Mr Skinner, Member of the European Parliament. The text of Mrs Fitzgerald's speech is contained in Annex E. The interest groups had met on the day before the Committee meetings commenced, and had held an additional meeting in October 1996.

The proposed activities and priorities were put to the Committee by the *Organisation Group*, which met on two occasions. This group was replaced by the *Planning Group*, which met three times.

Progress made by the Committee in its activities during 1996 mirrored the work undertaken by the Commission in accordance with the Community programme covering the period from 1996 to 2000. The Committee set up working groups with suitable terms of reference in specialised areas where it wished to give an opinion. Nineteen meetings were held, involving six working groups, of which five were concerned with technical aspects, namely *standardisation* (five meetings), *work-related stress* (five meetings), *occupational exposure levels* (three meetings), *scaffolding* (one meeting) and *pregnant women at work* (one meeting), while one group dealt with organisational aspects: *Advisory Committee operating procedures* (three meetings). A summary of the work of these groups is to be found in section 3.1 of this report.

To keep track of the Commission's work, the Committee set up eight groups and adopted the terms of reference for seven of them. Seven groups were disbanded either because their remit had been completed or because their work could no longer be given priority in the light of the available resources. A list of the groups concerned is contained in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this report.

The Committee's activity resulted in the adoption of its annual report and eleven opinions, which are reviewed in section 2.2 of this report.

### 2.1 20th activity report of the Advisory Committee *Document 5492/1/96*

The Committee adopted its 20th report, covering activities in 1995, at its meeting held on 30 May 1996.

## 2.2 Draft opinions adopted

### 2.2.1 OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES, draft Commission communication concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases

#### *Document 5008/96*

The Commission submitted to the Committee, at its meeting held on 30 May 1996, a draft communication concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases.

On 22 May 1990, the Commission had adopted a recommendation (90/326/EEC) on the adoption of a European schedule, which updated a recommendation of 23 July 1962 on the same subject. In this context, the Commission asked the Member States to inform it of the measures taken or envisaged pursuant to the recommendation.

On the basis of the information received, the Commission drew up a draft communication to the effect that:

the Commission, having examined the extent to which the recommendation has been implemented in the Member States, in order to determine whether there is any need to propose binding legislation, noted that the Member States had made a great effort to comply with the provisions set out in Annex I to the 1990 recommendation;

the incorporation in Annex I of certain diseases currently included in Annex II calls for subsequent in-depth analysis, which could be carried out in conjunction with revision of the Annexes to the recommendation in the light of new knowledge deriving from technical and scientific progress, having regard also to the changing situation in the Member States;

introduction of the mixed system of compensation on a wider scale in the Member States allowing, in certain cases, for compensation in respect of diseases which are occupational in origin but are not included in the national schedule, where the worker concerned provides evidence that the ailment is occupational in origin, could be a very positive development, making it possible in the medium or long term to move away from the current approach involving a specific list of occupational diseases for which compensation is available;

the Commission consequently does not consider it necessary, at the present time, to propose binding legislation to replace the 1990 recommendation. It may nevertheless give consideration to the matter in conjunction with any future update of the European schedule of occupational diseases before the year 2000, in the light of data deriving from scientific and technical progress, and having regard also to the results of the various activities and projects aimed at improving, among other things, the collection and comparability of data concerning occupational diseases and their epidemiological analysis.

*The Committee endorsed the content of the communication at its meeting on 30 May 1996.*

**2.2.2 EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS, draft communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament**

**Document 5009/1/96**

The Commission asked the Committee to give its opinion on the content of a draft communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the results of the assessment provided for in Council Directive 83/477/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work. The Committee instructed the *Occupational Exposure Levels* Group to examine the document.

Although some members of the group thought that the communication went well beyond a mere assessment of exposure limit values, the document was very welcome, since it addressed various aspects of the problem, including the question of substitutes.

When the Committee met, it accepted the Commission's conclusion that the measures laid down by existing Community legislation remained valid within the overall framework of protection of the health of workers exposed to asbestos, especially as many Member States already prohibit almost totally the use of asbestos and have adopted exposure limit values up to 75% lower than the "minimum requirements" prescribed by the Directive.

It was agreed that the Directive ought to be reviewed around the year 2000 in the light of the foreseeable developments in restrictions on placing asbestos and asbestos-containing products on the market.

*The Committee endorsed the content of the communication at its meeting on 30 May 1996. The interest groups also made their comments known to the Commission.*

**2.2.3 EXPOSURE LIMIT VALUES, proposal for a Commission Directive**

**Document 5006/2/96**

The Commission asked the Committee to give an opinion on its draft proposal for a Commission Directive on establishing a second list of 26 indicative limit values by implementing Council Directive 80/1107/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work (second Commission Directive within the meaning of Article 8(1) of Directive 80/1107/EEC).

The Committee instructed the *Occupational Exposure Levels* Group to look into the matter, after studying the work of the Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits in respect of the 26 substances in question, the group prepared a draft opinion.



The Committee approved the text of the proposed Directive but, in view of the disagreement between the workers' and employers' representatives, coupled with reservations voiced by two government representatives, concerning the proposed limits for three products, namely phosgene, hexane and 2-aminoethanol, it was suggested that these three elements be withdrawn from the list and reviewed in conjunction with establishment of the third list in the light of the observations put forward by the employers' representatives.

*The Committee endorsed the proposal for a Directive, with the exception of the three substances phosgene, hexane and 2-aminoethanol, at its meeting on 30 May 1996 (Document 5494/96).*

#### **2.2.4 WORK-RELATED STRESS** **Document 5501/2/96**

In the document entitled "General framework for action by the Commission of the European Communities in the field of safety, hygiene and health protection at work (1994-2000), COM(93) 560 final presented on 19 November 1993, the Commission outlined its aim of giving closer thought to, or embarking on examination of, problems relating to well-being at work, with particular reference to the prevention of excessive physical, nervous or mental tensions and stress. At its 46th meeting on 17 February 1994, the Committee set up a *Work-related Stress Group*, which was given the task of researching:

- any authoritative work relating to stress at the workplace;
- any action already taken at national or Community level;
- any problems that work-related stress can cause; and
- reporting its findings to the Committee for consideration of further actions.

To carry out its remit, the group considered that it needed to agree on a definition of stress and on an analysis model, which could provide a basis for its recommendations on future action. To this end, experts in the field were invited to contribute their know-how, including Professors Tom Cox and Lennart Levi.

The group wished to ensure that the definition and analysis model took into account both the positive and negative effects which work has on health, and that the definition allowed action to be limited to work-related stress and aspects of the working environment which employers and workers could influence.

After studying the relevant information available in the Member States, the group concluded that work-related stress should be tackled using a risk assessment or risk management strategy, and put forward a number of specific recommendations in respect of further action to be carried out at Community level, including a Commission guidance note, definition of areas where additional research should be conducted and development of a system for exchanging information on stress.

*The Committee adopted the draft opinion unanimously at its meeting in November 1996.*

The report on work-related stress will be published by the Commission in 1997. The Commission, together with the Dublin European Foundation and the Bilbao Agency, has started to consider what action should be taken in the light of the conclusions of the report.

#### **2.2.5 ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION PRE-STANDARDS** **Document 5088/1/96**

At the Commission's request, the Committee examined two new European pre-standards (ENV 50166-1 and 2) for human exposure to non-ionising radiation, adopted by CENELEC (Committee TC211) on 28 and 30 November 1994.

A study of the documents showed that CENELEC had set levels for exposure limits.

Pointing out that it is an agreed principle of European standardisation that technical standards-making bodies should not set human exposure levels for harmful agents, but should be confined to establishing test methods and criteria for the measurement of emissions from equipment, and noting also that the decision-making process as to what level of risk is acceptable is a political issue, the Committee delivered an opinion (Document 5088/1) requesting that CENELEC be invited to withdraw or modify the pre-standards when they expire in November 1997, and that any subsequent work should not involve the setting of human exposure limits.

*The draft opinion was adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Committee at its meeting on 27 November 1996.*

The employers' representatives did not associate themselves with the text, since they felt that they had not received the supplementary texts and information in time to enable them to give a substantive opinion.

## **2.2.6 STUDY OF MANDATES TO CEN/CENELEC**

### **2.2.6.1 FAIRGROUNDS**

#### **Document 5830/96**

At the Commission's request, the Committee examined a draft standardisation mandate addressed to CEN/CENELEC in connection with the safety of equipment for fairgrounds and amusement parks (Document 07/96 rev.2).

The Commission had drawn up a proposal for a Directive in this sector in 1991, but the Edinburgh European Council removed it from the European legislative programme as it was felt that the problem could be tackled under the principle of subsidiarity.

The Commission nevertheless considers that European standards focusing on safety aspects could provide the authorities responsible for safety assessment with a recognised base, thereby reducing the burden and enabling manufacturers and operators to offer equipment and services of recognised quality.

The Committee asked the *Standardisation* Group to examine the draft mandate to CEN/CENELEC for devising such standards. The group drew up an opinion in which it expressed the view that, although the mandate was clear, it would be advisable to highlight the health and safety of persons working on site and that standardisation should also be concerned with health aspects.

*The draft opinion was adopted unanimously by the Committee at its meeting on 27 November 1996.*

### **2.2.6.2 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

#### **(Documents 5382/96 and 5829/96)**

On the basis of Directive 89/686/EC, the Commission had given a mandate to CEN/CENELEC for the production of various standards relating to personal protective equipment (PPE). With standardisation having created several classes for each risk, the user is confronted with numerous possibilities for final choice, a situation which is not transparent for either the user or the market. In view of the apparent need for guidance in respect of PPE selection on the basis of their class of protection and the type of risk existing at the workplace, the Committee asked the Commission to prepare a draft mandate to CEN/CENELEC on the production of guides to the selection of personal protective equipment (Document 5382/96).

*The Committee adopted the draft opinion unanimously at its meeting on 30 May 1996.*

Having consulted experts, the Commission was of the opinion that a feasibility study on the need for and the proposed form of such guides was desirable prior to granting a mandate for their production; it accordingly proposed a draft "mandate to CEN/CENELEC for a feasibility study on the need and proposed form of a guide to the selection of personal protective equipment" (Document 5829/96).

The study should analyse in particular: guides already available in the Member States (including mandatory ones) in order to avoid duplication of work and conflicting contents; the priorities as regards the industrial sectors in which guidance could be used; and the possible content of the guides.

The report will include an analysis of the need for and the proposed form of guidance for the selection of personal protective equipment.

The social partners, legislators and industry must be given the opportunity to participate effectively in the work.

*The Committee unanimously endorsed the draft mandate at its meeting on 27 November 1996.*

#### **2.2.7 WORK PROGRAMME OF THE BILBAO EUROPEAN AGENCY** *Document 17/2/96*

Article 10 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94 of 18 July 1994 establishing a European Agency for Safety and Health at Work provides that "the Administrative Board shall adopt the Agency's annual work programme on the basis of a draft drawn up by the Director referred to in Article 11, after consultation of the Commission and of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work".

At its plenary meeting held on 19 and 20 March 1996, the Administrative Board of the Agency adopted the draft annual programme of work and forwarded it for opinion to the Commission and the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work.

This draft is consistent with the Agency's objectives and functions as laid down in the founding Regulation, while leaving considerable latitude, since the Director of the Agency had not yet been appointed at the time - the appointment was made on 3 July 1996.

The draft work programme is to be seen in the context of the Agency as an entirely new organisation. Over the 1996-97 period, subject to permanent staff being recruited and to such arrangements as the Agency will make for granting temporary contracts, the work programme should focus on the following main areas:

establishment and operation of an international information network: to establish a network made up of the principal component elements of Member States' national information networks, national focal points, future theme-based centres and international contact points. The network will collect and disseminate information;

setting the political priorities of the Agency: to explain the Agency's political framework underpinning the goals to be attained, and to point out in principle the chosen means of achieving those aims;

launching of a pilot project for the network: to collect information available at national and international level in respect of a specific topic relating to health and safety at work, in order to devise a model for the dissemination of information integrated into the Agency's network.

*The Committee gave a favourable opinion at its meeting on 30 May 1996, but pointed out that the programme was ambitious in the light of the limited resources available during the first year.*

## 2.3 Operational procedures

### 2.3.1 DECLARATION ON THE NEED FOR THE COMMITTEE TO BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT STANDARDISATION MANDATES TO CEN/CENELEC

*Document 5836/96*

The *Standardisation Group* was anxious that the Committee should impress upon the Commission the need to ensure that "draft standardisation mandates" to CEN/CENELEC which may affect the health, safety and well-being of workers are made available to the group in good time to enable it to give its opinion and, in any event, before the mandates are adopted by the Commission. The group asked the Committee to confirm that it had the task of examining and commenting on these draft mandates and to inform the Commission accordingly.

*The Committee adopted this opinion unanimously at its meeting on 27 November 1996.*

### 2.3.2 IMPROVING THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEDURES

*Document 5390/96*

Given the duties and responsibilities entrusted to the Advisory Committee by the Council in its Decision of June 1974, and having regard to the Commission's obligation to consult the social partners, the Committee instructed the *Advisory Committee Operating Procedures Group* to identify all the administrative, financial and procedural obstacles to the effective and efficient operation of the Advisory Committee, and to recommend appropriate solutions.

*The Committee adopted the opinion unanimously at its meeting on 30 May 1996.*

On the basis of this opinion, and having regard to the views of the Commission, the Committee decided:

to ask the Commission to prepare a proposal for the use of the new information and communications technologies in the Committee's activities; to set up a *Planning* Group in place of the *Organisation* Group, with a revised remit;

to instruct the *Planning* Group to draw up and submit a proposal for the 1998 budget and a work programme for the Committee for 1997 and 1998.

### 2.3.3 EXPLORATORY DEBATE

*Document 5833/2/96*

In line with the remit given to it by the Committee on 30 May 1996, the *Planning* Group drew up the document entitled "Consideration by the Advisory Committee of initiatives in support of the Commission reflecting the Community programme concerning safety, hygiene and health at work (COM(95) 282 final).

This document constitutes a basis for debate on the "strategy" of the Advisory Committee; in the light of the Committee's report, and having regard to the 11 actions set out in the Commission's programme covering the period from 1996 to 2000, it is recommended in particular that the Committee:

- use this document as a basis for an exploratory debate both within the interest groups and at Committee level;
- decide upon and adopt its goal up to the year 2000;
- instruct the *Planning* Group to finalise the work programme for 1997 and 1998 in the light of these discussions;
- instruct the *Planning* Group to incorporate, when setting out the work programme, appropriate changes in its working methods to improve efficiency and means of communication;
- put the case for a sufficient level of resources to carry out its work;
- establish an appropriate system for assessing progress made in achieving the objectives set.

With the debate clarifying the priorities of each interest group, there seemed to be a need for the strategy to be reviewed by the *Planning* Group in order to propose a method for setting priorities; the work to be carried out by the Advisory Committee in the near future would have to be assessed and the work programme drawn up in the light of progress made by the Commission.

*At its meeting on 27 November 1996, the Committee decided to ask the Planning Group to draw up a rolling plan for the remainder of the programme and to prepare a proposal for finalising the 1997 work programme, taking into account the work under way or in the pipeline and the resources allocated to the Committee.*

### **3. ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUPS/END-OF-YEAR STRUCTURE**

#### **3.1 Working groups active in 1996 and continuing their activities in 1997**

##### **3.1.1 STANDARDISATION**

The activities of this group are of an ongoing nature, since the Committee instructs the group to study standardisation mandates as and when they are submitted by the Commission. The group also deals with general problems relating to health and safety at work in the context of standardisation.

The group met five times in 1996 and drew up draft opinions on electromagnetic radiation pre-standards (section 2.2.5 above) and on mandates to CEN/CENELEC (sections 2.2.6.1 and 2.2.6.2 above). It will continue its activities in 1997.

##### **3.1.2 OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE LEVELS**

This group is consulted on the fixing of priorities in respect of the substances for which occupational exposure levels should be established and prepares opinions on the procedures to be followed for collecting the data needed to establish occupational exposure levels.

The group monitors the work of the Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits (see section 4.3 below), prepares opinions on Commission proposals for establishing occupational exposure levels and reports on progress made with its activities at meetings of the Committee.

The group met three times in 1996; it prepared opinions on the draft Commission communication concerning exposure to asbestos (section 2.2.2 above) and on the draft proposal for a Commission Directive establishing a list of limit values (section 2.2.3 above). The group will continue its activities in 1997.

### **3.1.3 SCAFFOLDING**

This group is required to prepare an Advisory Committee opinion on a draft proposal for a Council Directive on scaffolding.

The group met on one occasion in 1996 and will continue its activities in 1997.

### **3.1.4 PREGNANT WOMEN**

The task of this group is to assist the Commission in drawing up guidelines as regards assessment of the chemical, physical and biological agents and industrial processes considered hazardous for the safety or health of pregnant workers and those who have recently given birth or are breast-feeding.

These guidelines also encompass movements and posture, mental and physical fatigue and other forms of physical and mental stress.

The group met on one occasion in 1996 and will continue its activities in 1997.

## **3.2 Working groups set up in 1996**

On the basis of information supplied by the Commission regarding progress made with the Community programme concerning safety, hygiene and health at work (COM(95)282 final), the Committee decided to set up eight working groups and to replace the *Organisation* Group with the *Planning* Group.

### **3.2.1 Training**

The group was set up in November 1996 with the task of advising the Committee in the implementation of the "Training" chapter of the programme and, in particular, as regards the possible preparation of a reference document which could provide a basis for recommendations on occupational safety and health training, while focusing also on the needs of young people as future workers, and with the further task of advising the Committee in the implementation of any back-up activities at Community level.

### **3.2.2 Self-employed workers**

Set up in November 1996, this group has the task of preparing an Advisory Committee opinion on the need for a proposal for a Council recommendation on the safety and health at work of self-employed workers; the group is required also to examine the range of possible actions at Community level for meeting the needs arising and tackling the problems liable to result from the extension of Community health and safety measures to self-employed workers (action 8 of the programme).



### 3.2.3 *Carcinogens/Mutagens*

Set up in November 1996, this group is required to prepare an Advisory Committee opinion on a proposal for amending Council Directive 90/394/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work, with particular reference to:

- measures for protection against the risks related to exposure to mutagenic substances not already covered by the Directive;
- the question of the carcinogenicity of wood dusts with a view to their inclusion in the Directive, and clarifying how the provisions of Directive 90/394/EEC could be applied to wood dusts and other substances which might have similar carcinogenic effects;
- studying the possibility of consolidating within the Directive existing Directives on carcinogens at the workplace, in particular vinyl chloride monomer and asbestos.

At the time of adoption of the common position on the proposal for the first amendment of Directive 90/394/EEC, on 24 September 1996, the Council invited the Commission to submit the above proposal "as soon as the scientific and technical knowledge permits and, in any event, not later than 31 December 1997".

The Commission, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty, especially as regards its right of initiative, intends to examine the relevant technical and scientific issues in consultation with the Member States and with the assistance of the Advisory Committee and the Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits.

### 3.2.4 *Economic and social appraisal of health and safety legislation*

Set up in November 1996, this group will be required to prepare an Advisory Committee opinion on the Commission's proposals for a methodology in respect of the economic and social appraisal of proposed legislation in the field of health and safety and a procedure for the appraisal, using this methodology and methods already employed in the Member States, of draft European directives. The group will draw upon a report compiled for the Commission on "the economic appraisal of European health and safety at work legislation", which reviews the current procedures and available methods for assessing the economic impact (both costs and benefits) of health and safety legislation at European, national and company level, and puts forward proposals for practical impact assessment models at European and national levels, including a procedure specifically designed for EU directives.

### *3.2.5 Multidisciplinary protective and preventive services / Health surveillance at work*

Amalgamation of two groups previously in existence; the terms of reference were confirmed in November 1996:

The aim of this group is to investigate the problems encountered and the experience acquired in setting up multidisciplinary protective and preventive services for employees in all sectors, industries and undertakings, public or private.

A further task of the group is to analyse how health surveillance of workers is carried out in the different Member States.

### *3.2.6 Pregnant women*

Set up in May 1996, this group enables the Committee to assist the Commission in establishing guidelines for assessing the chemical, physical and biological agents and industrial processes considered hazardous for the safety or health of pregnant workers and those who have recently given birth or are breast-feeding. These guidelines also encompass movements and posture, mental and physical fatigue and other forms of physical and mental stress (see section 3.1.4 above).

### *3.2.7 Scaffolding*

Set up in May 1996, the group's remit is to prepare an opinion on a draft proposal for a Council Directive on scaffolding (see section 3.1.3 above).

### *3.2.8 Biological agents*

Having been inactive since November 1994, when its draft opinion was adopted by the Committee, this group was reactivated in 1996 and given the new task of preparing an Advisory Committee opinion on the proposed amendment of the Council Directive of 12 October 1993 amending Directive 90/679/EEC<sup>1</sup> on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to biological agents at work (93/88/EEC<sup>2</sup>) so as to adapt to technical and scientific progress the annexes to the Directive in the light of the most recent knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No L 374, 31.12.1990, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> OJ No L 268, 29.10.1993, p. 71

### **3.2.9 *Planning Group to replace the Organisation Group***

## **3.3 Disbandment of working groups**

The Committee decided to wind up those groups which had completed their work or were inactive, or whose continuation was no longer justified in the light of the resources allocated.

### **3.3.1 *Work-related stress***

Set up in February 1994, this group held five meetings in 1996. It drew up a report which was adopted by the Committee at its meeting in November 1996 (see section 2.2.4 above).

The group was disbanded in November 1996.

### **3.3.2 *Audiovisual aids***

Set up in February 1993, this group was involved with the organisation in 1995 of the second European film festival designed to raise awareness of and provide training on safety and health at the workplace (see 1993 and 1994 annual reports). With the next festival due to be held in 1998, the group was disbanded in November 1996.

### **3.3.3 *Research***

Set up in February 1993, this group's tasks included the setting of priorities for research in conjunction with recommendations of the Advisory Committee relating to health and safety programmes, the fourth action programme for health and safety and the fifth research and development programme.

Having prepared two draft opinions which were adopted by the Committee in 1995, the group was disbanded in November 1996.

### **3.3.4 *Senior labour inspectors***

Set up in February 1995 with the aim of preparing an opinion on the draft Commission Decision establishing the Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors, this group had been unable to meet in good time, the Commission having taken its Decision in July 1995.

The group was disbanded in November 1996.

### **3.3.5 *Advisory Committee operating procedures***

In line with the remit given to it in November 1995, the group prepared a draft opinion which was adopted by the Committee in May 1996 (see section 2.3.2 above).

The group was disbanded in November 1996.

### **3.3.6 *Alcohol and drugs at the workplace***

Set up in February 1994 to examine the draft report of a study carried out jointly by the International Labour Organisation and the Commission in the Member States, and to submit to the Committee proposals concerning the representation of the social partners at a conference organised by the Commission, this group delivered an interim opinion in November 1994, which was adopted unanimously, but did not deliver a final opinion. The group was disbanded in November 1996.

### **3.3.7 *Fourth action programme***

The group was set up in 1995 with a remit to draw up a draft opinion on the Commission's proposals for a fourth action programme, taking into account the Advisory Committee's opinion on the priorities for action in the period from 1995 to 2000. With its remit having been taken over by the Planning Group (see section 2.3.3 above), this group was disbanded in November 1996.

## **4. COOPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES**

The Committee collaborates or is in contact with other organisations at European and international level.

### **4.1 *Safety and Health Commission***

The main tasks of the Safety and Health Commission for the Mining and Other Extractive Industries (SHCMOEI) are: to monitor developments in the field of safety and health in the extractive industries, to submit to the governments of the Member States practical proposals for improving safety and health protection at the workplace, and to foster exchanges of useful information.

Since 1994, representatives of the SHCMOEI attend the meetings of the Committee as observers. Similarly, representatives of the Committee are invited to the plenary meetings of the SHCMOEI, with each interest group sending two observers. This process ensures more effective dissemination of information between the two bodies. Although they clearly share areas of common interest, the two bodies are largely perceived as separate entities. The SHCMOEI is essentially a technically-oriented body which deals with specific safety problems in the extractive industries. Technical aspects constitute a key element of its work, whereas the Committee is also qualified to discuss fundamental issues of safety and health protection at work.

#### **4.2 Senior Labour Inspectors Committee**

Created by Commission Decision 95/319/EC of 12 July 1995, the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee is composed of two representatives of the labour inspection services from each Member State, and is chaired by a representative of the Commission.

The Committee submits an annual report on its activities to the Commission, with particular reference to any problem relating to the enforcement or to the monitoring of the enforcement of secondary Community law in the field of health and safety at work. The Commission forwards the report to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work.

#### **4.3 Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits to Chemical Agents**

Set up in response to a request from the Council, by Commission Decision 95/320/EC of 12 July 1995, this Scientific Committee is required to examine the health effects of chemical agents on workers at work. Its activities are monitored by the Advisory Committee and, more particularly, by the *Occupational Exposure Levels* Group in connection with the preparation of its opinions on proposals for a Directive implementing Council Directive 80/1107/EEC as amended by Directive 88/642/EEC.

#### **4.4 Social partners**

A representative of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and a member of the employers' group in conjunction with the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) attend the meetings of the Committee and ensure liaison between the members of their respective interest groups.

#### **4.5 Trade Union Technical Bureau**

The European Trade Union Technical Bureau for Health and Safety (TUTB) was set up in 1989 by the ETUC as a vehicle for keeping close track of the technical work carried out by standardisation organisations. Backed by the European Parliament, which allocated a budget heading in 1989, the TUTB signed a multiannual agreement with the Commission in the same year. It conducts studies and supplies information tying in closely with the European harmonisation and standardisation work in the field of safety and health at the workplace and with the Committee's *Standardisation* Group. A representative of the TUTB attends the Committee's meetings as an observer.

#### **4.6 International Labour Office**

A representative of the ILO is invited to the meetings of the Committee as an observer.

#### **4.7 European Foundation**

Two representatives of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions are invited to the meetings of the Committee as observers; the material which they present to the meetings includes the Foundation's work programme. Cooperation with the Foundation will become more clearly defined in the light of the report on work-related stress (see section 2.1.4 above).

#### **4.8 Bilbao European Agency**

Under the decision establishing the Agency, the Committee is consulted on its annual work programme and receives a copy of its annual report (see section 2.1.7 above).

**ANNEX A  
COUNCIL DECISION**

**LEGAL BASIS**

**(Extracts)**

**Council Decision of 27 June 1974 on the setting up of an Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work (extracts):**

**“The Council of the European Communities (...)**

**Whereas a standing body should be envisaged to assist the Commission in the preparation and implementation of activities in the fields of safety, hygiene and health protection at work and to facilitate cooperation between national administrations, trades unions and employers' organisations ...**

**HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:**

**Article 1**

**An Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work is hereby established.**

**Article 2**

**The Committee shall have the task of assisting the Commission in the preparation and implementation of activities in the fields of safety, hygiene and health protection at work.  
(...)**

**Article 3**

- 1. The Committee shall produce an annual report on its activities.**
- 2. The Commission shall forward that report to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community”.**

**ANNEX B**  
**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Government representatives**

<b>MEMBER STATE</b>	<b>FULL MEMBERS</b>	<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS</b>
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	Dr SZYSMANSKI Dr BREINDL	Dr FINDING Dr JENNER
<b>BELGIUM</b>	Mr HESELMANS Mr WAMPACH	Mr RZONZEF Mr STEEN
<b>DENMARK</b>	Mr O. ANDERSEN Mr J. ANDERSEN	Mrs SKJOLDAGER Mrs STEFFENSEN
<b>FINLAND</b>	Mr HURMALAINEN Mr LAMBERG	Mr KALLIO Mr RANTANEN
<b>FRANCE</b>	Mrs GUIGUEN Mr BOISNEL	Mr PASQUIER Mr ROBERT
<b>GERMANY</b>	Mr OFFERMANN Mrs STREFFER	Mr GIESEN Mr RIESE
<b>GREECE</b>	Mrs KAFETZOPOULOU Mr KOUMERTAS	Mr TANGAS Mrs PISSIMISSI
<b>IRELAND</b>	Mr WALSH Mr HENRY	Mr FUREY Mr DONNELLAN
<b>ITALY</b>	Dr FAVENTI Dr ROCCA	Dr GUERRIERI Mr ALVINO
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	Dr RUME Mr WEBER	Mr FEYREISEN Mr DEMUTH
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	Dr DEN HELD Mr VOS	Dr MIDDELPLAATS Mr MEPPELDER
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	Dr COSTA MARINHO Dr DURAO	Mr CASTELO BRANCO Mrs PINTO MARVAO
<b>SPAIN</b>	Mr CHOZAS PEDRERO Mr G. HORTIGUELA	Mrs G. DEL CASTILLO Mr CASTELLA
<b>SWEDEN</b>	Mr BYLUND Mr CLOAREC	Prof. KILBOM Mr BARREFELT
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	Mr CLIFTON Miss DEAKINS	Mrs SOAVE Mr HIGHAM



**Employers' representatives**

<b>MEMBER STATE</b>	<b>FULL MEMBERS</b>	<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS</b>
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	Mrs SCHWENG Mr BRAUNER	Mr DUNGL Mr STRIMITZER
<b>BELGIUM</b>	Mr LEONARD Mr DE LANGE	Mr PELEGRIN Mr DILLEN
<b>DENMARK</b>	Mr JEPSEN Mr NIELSEN	Mr SORENSEN Mrs KOLVING
<b>FINLAND</b>	Mr GRAHN Mr KUIKKO	Mr AHTELA Miss LUOMALA
<b>FRANCE</b>	Mr TASSIN Mr PEYRICAL	Dr AUBRUN Mrs CORMAN
<b>GERMANY</b>	Mr SCHEEL Mr KUHLMANN	Mr BEEKHUIZEN Dr KREIZBERG
<b>GREECE</b>	Mr TSAMOUSSOPOULOS Mr ZIMALIS	Mr KALDIS Mr VGONTAS
<b>IRELAND</b>	Mr TUMULTY Mr BRISCOE	Mr LAWLOR Mr CASSIDY
<b>ITALY</b>	Mr GIUSTI Dr FREGOSO	Mr ROVIGLIONI Mr SPANO
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	Mr SAUBER Dr METZLER	Dr BOLLENDORF Mr LANG
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	Mr VAN OSTALJEN Mrs DE MEESTER	Mr VERHOEF Mrs HOPMANS
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	Mr COSTA TAVARES Mr LIMA AMORIM	Mr BARROSO Mr TEVES COSTA
<b>SPAIN</b>	Mr MANZANO SANZ Mr SANCHIS AHUYO	Mr BELTRAN APARICIO Mr MUNOZ MUGICA
<b>SWEDEN</b>	Mr LIND Mr FROSTLING	Mr HAGMAN Mr HOLMGREN
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	Dr ASHERSON Dr WHITE	Mr HUGHES Mr CLARE

**Workers' representatives**

<b>MEMBER STATE</b>	<b>FULL MEMBERS</b>	<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS</b>
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	<b>Mrs CZESKLEBA Mr HEIDER</b>	<b>Mr SCHRAMHAUSER Mrs REITINGER</b>
<b>BELGIUM</b>	<b>Mr FONCK Mrs CYPRES</b>	<b>Mr PHILIPS Mr VAN DER HAEGEN</b>
<b>DENMARK</b>	<b>Mr MALTESEN Mr POULSEN</b>	<b>Mr HEEGAARD Mr NORKOV</b>
<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>Mr METSÄMÄKI Miss TYÖLÄJÄRVI</b>	<b>Miss HEIKURA Mr SAARIKANGAS</b>
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>Mr PHILIP Mr MARTIN</b>	<b>Mr LEMITRES Mr SEDES</b>
<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>Mr KONSTANTY Mr ANGERMAIER</b>	<b>Mr GROWITSCH Mr ZWINGMANN</b>
<b>GREECE</b>	<b>Mr POLITIS Mr DRIVAS</b>	<b>Mr PAPANAYOTOU Dr CHATZIS</b>
<b>IRELAND</b>	<b>Mr WALL Mr CRONIN</b>	<b>Mr O'NEILL Mr O'HALLORAN</b>
<b>ITALY</b>	<b>Mrs BRIGHI Mrs BENEDETTINI</b>	<b>Dr TASCINI Dr GALLI</b>
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	<b>Mr MILLER Mr GIARDIN</b>	<b>Mr ABBATI Mr MERSCH</b>
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	<b>Mrs VERBURG Mr WILDERS</b>	<b>Mr MULLER Mr SPRENGER</b>
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	<b>Mr GOMES TAVARES Mr SARAMAGO</b>	<b>Mr SANTOS NEVES Mr ALMEIDA TEXEIRA</b>
<b>SPAIN</b>	<b>Mr CARCOBA Mrs DIAZ OJEDA</b>	<b>Mr FERNANDEZ ARROYO Mrs VILLAR FERNANDEZ</b>
<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>Mr TENGBERG Mrs BREIDENJÖ</b>	<b>Mr LAVENIUS Mrs THULESTEDT</b>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	<b>Mr MELLISH Miss GIBSON</b>	<b>Mr TUDOR Mr PICKERING</b>

**ANNEX C**  
**COMPOSITION OF THE WORKING GROUPS**

	STRESS	STANDARDISATION	ADVISORY COMMITTEE OPERATING PROCEDURES	PLANNING	PREGNANT WOMEN	EXPOSURE LEVELS	SCAFFOLDING
<b>Chairman :</b> <b>Vice-chairman :</b> <b>Rapporteur :</b>	Mr POULSEN Mr VAN DER POEL Mr DE LANGE	ALVINO / IT GIUSTI / IT MELLISH / UK	BYLUND / S FROSTLING / S FONCK / BE	WALSH / IRL	Dr AUBRUN / F	Mr KONSTANTY Mr STEEN Dr AUBRUN	Mr PELEGRIN / BE Mr KONSTANTY / D GOUV
<b>GOVERNMENTS</b>	VAN DER POEL / NE J. ANDERSEN / DA DARVILL / UK MURPHY / IRL IMBRECHTS / BE KUHN / DE GREIF / DE	ALVINO / IT WEBER / LUX FUREY / IRL DEN HELD / NE	SOAVE / UK BYLUND / S SHEYE / DA PISSIMISSI / GR BOHNEL / FR DEN HELD / NE	ROCCA / IT WALSH / IRL WEBER / LUX DEN HELD / NE DEAKINS / UK BYLUND / S	FAVENTI / IT KAFETZOPOULOS SAUNDERS / UK SHEYE / DK PETTERSON / S	KOUNDAKIAN / UK BOMBARDIERE / IT KLEIN / DE STEEN / BE KAJANTI / FI	CANDREVA / IT MURRAY / UK PATTAY / S MOCKELS / B CHOZAS / ES
<b>EMPLOYERS</b>	DE LANGE / BE DE MEESTER / NE NIELSEN / DA AUBRUN / FR DE LIEDEKERKE / UNICE	GAMBELLI / FR GIUSTI / IT SCHEEL / DE BORMANS / UNICE LIND / S	CORMAN / FR FROSTLING / S GIUSTI / IT ASHERSON / UK KUHLMAN / DE DE LIEDEKERKE / UNICE	CORMAN / FR DE LIEDEKERKE / UNICE GIUSTI / IT JEPSEN / DA TASSIN / FR	WHITE / UK AUBRUN / F BORMANS / UNICE	BEEKHUIZEN / DE AUBRUN / FR JEPSEN / DA VERHOEF / NE LEWIS / UK GRAMPELLA / IT BORMANS / UNICE	PELEGRIN / B STEINMAURER / AUT POUILLEROUX / FR MACHADO / P BORMANS / UNICE
<b>WORKERS</b>	GUEANT / TUTB POULSEN / DA GADEA / ES TIVEY / UK WILDERS / NE LENERT / AUT BREIDENSJÓ / S	ANGERMAIER / DE GALLI / IT SAPIR / TUTB MELLISH / UK TENGBERG / S	KONSTANTY / DE POULSEN / DA CARCOBA / ES SEDES / FR FONCK / BE CARLSLUND / ETUC	KONSTANTY / DE SEDES / FR CARCOBA / ES BECKER / ETUC FONCK / BE	MORENO / ES PAUL / UK GRODZKI / ETUC MARTIN / F PHILIPS / B	MALASPINA / IT SUCH / ES KONSTANTY / DE HEEGAARD / DA GRODZKI / TUTB MARTIN / FR	NILSSON / S VERDE / B KONSTANTY / D BRYSON / UK HELLSTEN / B
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	See "Terms of reference" document	Scrutiny of proposals for standards requested by the Commission from CEN/CENELEC	See "Terms of reference" document	See "Terms of reference" document	See "Terms of reference" document	See "Terms of reference" document	See "Terms of reference" document
<b>Official responsible</b>	G. ARESINI S. MAUER V/E/5 Tel. 32260 / 34265	A. LOMMEL V/E/4 Tel. 33871	E. ROTHER Tel. 32268 C. LAFFUT Tel. 32739 V/E/4	E. ROTHER Tel. 32268 V/E/4	G. ARESINI V/E/5 Tel. 32260	R. HAIGH V/E/5 Tel. 32734	A. LOMMEL V/E/4 Tel. 33871

SCHEDULE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN 1996

ANNEX D

MEETING	Days	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Organisation	4		6		2							
Plenary	2					29/30					26/27*	
Standardisation	4	9		14			13		26			19
Stress	3			6		7 (E.G.)	26		25	16 (E.G.)		
OELs	3		1	21							5	
Scaffolding	1								19	cancelle d		
Preg. women	1									16		
A.C. op. meth.	3		8	5	10							
Planning	2							9		15		11
Employers	1									29		
Workers	1									30		
Governments	1									31		

MINUTES AVAILABLE


(\*) DUBLIN

**ANNEX E**  
**SPEECH BY MRS FITZGERALD**

**EUROPE IS ABOUT PEOPLE**

First of all, on behalf of the Irish Presidency, I am very pleased to be here at the plenary meeting of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work. The European project is about Europe with a human face, a Europe which is based on principles of social solidarity and minimum decency standards for Europe's people in the world of work. Your work as an Advisory Committee representing both sides of industry and experts in the field is a very important underpinning of that part of the European project, the part of Europe which is not only about economic and monetary union, interest rates, monetary committees and European monetary institutes but the Europe that's about the daily lives of ordinary people as they go to work and ensuring that those people come home again from work in safety and in as good health as when they set out that morning.

**IRISH PRESIDENCY**

Your remit is a broad one and we are very pleased in the Irish Presidency to have put health and safety concerns high up on our own agenda. I was very pleased at the meeting of the Council of Social Affairs Ministers that we adopted a Common Position on the amending Directive for Carcinogens which will ensure that we have a common definition of carcinogens; that not only substances which are definitively ruled by the scientists to be carcinogenic in nature but also those substances which the scientists tell us are most probably carcinogens are also included now under the protection of European law.

We have also strengthened the protection because we deal not only with the absorption of carcinogens through the mouth and into the lungs but also absorption through which substances can enter the human body. The third major element in this Directive is that we strengthened the rules in relation to benzene and this will be of particular benefit to workers working in the oil business and in the refineries and indeed on our own streets working as petrol pump attendants and so on in the normal garages. These limits will go down to three parts in a million by 1999 and to one part per million by the year 2002.

I think this is an important strengthening of protection and, as an Advisory Committee, you have been asked to come back to us by the end of 1997 with your opinion in relation to mutagens. We were anxious to move forward where we had agreement.

There was not full agreement on how we would handle the mutagens issue for scientific agreement and so we are very eagerly awaiting your opinion so that we can sign off on the other half of this package.

The Irish Presidency has also made substantial progress in relation to a new Directive on Chemical Agents and we hope to pass this on to our successors, the Dutch Presidency, in a form where it will be ripe for adoption.

## **THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OPINION ON STRESS**

I understand that this morning you have adopted an important opinion on stress in the workplace. I have had an opportunity to read this particular report. It is a very good and very practical opinion and I think it makes again the point I made at the outset that we are human beings first and we are workers second. As human beings we bring the stresses of our personal life into the workplace. If that is causing problems it can affect working relationships, causing problems of health and safety. The workplace, too, can be a stressful place. If people are unclear about their job description, if they are working in noisy, dusty environments, if the work is extremely monotonous, if there is not clear direction or clear delineation of responsibilities, if employers and supervisors do not say thank you for a job well done, if people are not given enough time to complete tasks: all of these factors can add to workplace stress.

## **EUROPEAN HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK**

One of the most useful things that I attended last year was the Health and Safety Week organised by one of our major international companies, Braun. Their Health and Safety at Work Week not only addressed the conventional issues of workplace health and safety that we are all familiar with - safety on the production line, smoking policy, safety planning, identification of risks, but they also brought in people from women's aid dealing with family violence. They brought in the police authorities, the drugs unit, because there are parents there who are worried about their teenagers who may be offered drugs in school, offered drugs in the street. This programme was looking at the total person in the workplace, looking at stresses in their lives because they know these stresses impact on our other stresses. A woman wanted a change of job because her job involved a lot of lifting and she was having problems with her breasts. The Safety Officer recommended to her to go to the doctor. She went to the doctor and there was a mastectomy performed almost instantly. The woman had breast cancer. Fifteen years on she is healthy and the story illustrates how dealing with the whole person is so important.

## **SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS**

Your agenda deals with some other very important areas. The area of self-employment may be one of the by-products of an attempt to set down floors in terms of minimum social standards in that more and more people who are like employees, quasi-employees, are being redesignated as self-employed, sometimes to get around basic employment protection law. We find in Ireland that the self-employed workers in farming and fishing are the people who have the poorest safety record and the highest number of deaths from work-related accidents. Often it is because people who are genuinely self-employed feel they do not carry the same level of personal responsibility where somebody who is an employer knows they carry a legal and a moral responsibility for a workforce. Somebody who is an employee will expect that their work is organised in safety. But the self-employed are a particularly high-risk group. I think there is a particular concern, too, about atypical workers where there may not be a very clear health and safety responsibility and health and safety practice.

## **TRAINING**

The other area of your work programme I would like to single out is the area of training. Tomorrow, we are hosting under the Irish Presidency a major conference on health and

safety in education and the role that schools play in fostering a health and safety culture. We know again from our figures that it is young workers, first-time workers, who maybe do not know new practices and procedures, who are often most at risk of having accidents. Unless there is training for the new work in health and safety practice, they learn bad habits that they carry through their working lifetimes.

I could not stress enough the importance of training for health and safety practice, training of management in risk assessment and safety planning, in ensuring the safety plans which are there are actually implemented, and training for workers in safety conscientiousness and safety practice on the job. Most workplace accidents, and I personally get a report as a Minister in Ireland of all the fatal accidents, are avoidable if there are proper health and safety procedures. Sadly, whenever we do surveys we find businesses, and small businesses in particular, which do not meet their legal obligations for proper health and safety planning, for risk assessment and for drawing up a risk strategy. If you do not plan for safety, it is like dicing with death, it is literally chance rather than planning. We need to continually get the message out about safety planning and about implementation. That is founded on good training for workers and for managements in the whole safety message.

### **ECONOMIC ASPECT**

Finally, health and safety is something that has an important economic spin-off. It is interesting here in Ireland to see that those companies which consistently carry off health and safety awards are, by and large, our biggest companies and our biggest employers - good companies with good managements who see safety planning and safety management as part of good management. They see that investing in health and safety is something that makes economic sense. In Ireland this year, we will spend about IR£200 million on insurance or on claims for accidents in the workplace, most of which are avoidable. If we were to take part of that money by say, targeting a 20% reduction in accidents, it would translate into IR£40 million. If we were to reinvest that in Irish business, we could create 4 000 extra jobs. That is not a trivial outcome. All our economies are under-performing to the extent that there is money spent on paying for accidents, paying for restitution, paying for rehabilitation, paying for accident compensation and paying the excess insurance that has funded those who lack proper safety management and safety practice. The bottom line is that not only in human terms, in terms of people who go out to work whole and come home to their families whole, but also in hard cash, there is a lot of money at stake invested in accidents but health and safety pays off.

Thank you.

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