



## **The implementation of the Community health and safety directives in the Member States**

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The different themes of this conference involve standards compatible with the European "New approach" which can guarantee the maintenance of the high level of protection of health and of safety at work in Europe.

My contribution is closely related to this issue, as there are close links between the new approach product Directives and the health and safety Directives, which I am going to treat.

There is a very wide range of Community health and safety Directives, first and foremost the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC, to which adds its "daughter" and other Directives, which deal with e.g. work places, work equipment, personal protective equipment, manual handling of heavy loads, visual display units, safety and health signs, physical agents, asbestos, chemical agents, and biological agents.

As regards the 15 "old" Member States, there are several sources of information as to the practical implementation of the health and safety at work Directives, and among them the Commission's evaluation report on the practical implementation of the provisions of the health and safety at work Directives, the Framework 89/391/EEC Directive and the first five of its individual directives from February 2004.

It results from the report that the implementation problems concern, i.e., an insufficient level of understanding of the provisions on health and safety, problems in relation with the risk assessment, protective and preventive services, the information, consultation, participation and training of workers, organization and management of health and safety at work, and enforcement.

As far as the 10 new Member States are concerned, the Commission has access to less information. They are for example not included in the practical implementation report from 2004. However, studies show specific implementation problems.

Of utmost importance is that the prevention culture, which is the corner stone of the Framework Directive, still has to be more deeply rooted in many of these countries. Other problems concern the competent authorities in the field of Occupational Safety and Health, risk awareness, the state of machinery, and that personal protective equipment is too seldom used. There are great problems in the sectors of construction and public works as well as agriculture and forestry.