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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work
(COM(2007)0046 – C6-0062/2007 – 2007/0020(COD))

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The aim is to establish a framework for the systematic production of statistics regarding health and health and safety at the workplace. The main goal is to give a consolidated and firm legal basis to the collection of the data. Eurostat is the designated organisation for the implementation of the regulation. The proposal is not focused on policy developments. The collected data will give a statistical overview of the developments concerning health and health and safety of the workplace in Member States and in the EU.

The development of indicators is important in view of the Lisbon strategy and demographic change. One of the key objectives of the strategy is more and better jobs and within this one of the elements is improving health and safety at the workplace. Also the Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002 - 2006¹ calls upon Commission and Member States to step up work on harmonising statistics on accidents at work and occupational illnesses. It is also important to have this information in order to improve prevention and thereby reducing the economic costs.

Presently, the data is collected through a "gentleman agreements", causing some limitations in the comparability. In order to receive comparable data the Member States need clear time schedules and objectives for the implementation. During consultations it became clear that without a legal framework a large majority of the Member States would not be able to collect the data.

Article 285 of the Treaty establishing the European Community provide the legal basis for Community statistics. Only then the Commission can coordinate the necessary harmonisation of the statistical information, while the collection of the data is done by the Member States. The Commission will ensure this by dealing with subject such as definition of variables, breakdown, dates of implementation and frequency, etc.. Gender should be introduced as a breakdown to have information regarding possible gender differences. Flexibility will be left to Member States concerning for example main elements of sources.

For the health and safety on the workplace the used definitions are given in annexes IV and V of the proposal. For the domain of the Accidents at work (annex IV) also, if possible, data from the ILO will be used. Occupational diseases and other work-related health problems and illnesses (annex V) are defined as a case which is recognised by national authorities. Some of the data will also be collected from a population survey.

The complementary financing will be provided for the health and safety at the workplace in the framework of the Community programme for employment and social solidarity (PROGRESS)². The priorities of this programme are defined by the PROGRESS committee in DG EMPL. In principle financial support to help Member States in further building up national capacities to implement improvements and new tools of statistical data collections should be included.

¹ COM(2002)0118.

² COM(2005)0536.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Text proposed by the Commission¹

Amendments by Parliament

Amendment 1 Recital 17

(17) In particular, the Commission should be empowered to determine definitions, subjects and breakdown (including variables and classifications), sources whenever relevant and provision of data and metadata (including reference periods, intervals and time limits) as regards the domains referred to in Article 2 and in the Annexes 1 to 5 to this Regulation. Since these are measures of general scope designed to amend or delete non-essential elements of this Regulation, or to supplement this Regulation by the addition of new non-essential elements, they should be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny provided for in Article 5a of Decision 1999/468/EEC.

(17) In particular, the Commission should be empowered to determine definitions, subjects and breakdown (including **gender**, variables and classifications), sources whenever relevant and provision of data and metadata (including reference periods, intervals and time limits) as regards the domains referred to in Article 2 and in the Annexes 1 to 5 to this Regulation. Since these are measures of general scope designed to amend or delete non-essential elements of this Regulation, or to supplement this Regulation by the addition of new non-essential elements, they should be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny provided for in Article 5a of Decision 1999/468/EEC.

Justification

The Commission should be empowered to determine definitions, subjects and breakdowns. Regarding the breakdowns gender should be included to have information regarding possible gender differences concerning health and safety at work.

Amendment 2 Recital 17 a (new)

¹ OJ C, p.

(17a) Complementary financing for the collection of the data in the field of health and safety will be provided in the framework of the Community programme for employment and social solidarity (PROGRESS). Within this framework financial resources should be used to help Member States in further building up national capacities to implement improvements and new tools of statistical data collections in the field of health and safety at work.

Justification

The priorities of PROGRESS are defined by the PROGRESS committee in DG EMPL. Financial support to help Member States in further building up national capacities to implement improvements and new tools of statistical data collections should be included. At present it is not per definition included.

Amendment 3
Article 5, paragraph 3

3. The statistical methodologies and data collections to be developed for the compilation of statistics on public health and health and safety at work at Community level shall take into consideration the need for coordination, whenever relevant, with the activities of international organisations in the field, in order to ensure international comparability of statistics and consistency of data collections.

3. The statistical methodologies and data collections to be developed for the compilation of statistics on public health and health and safety at work at Community level shall take into consideration the need for coordination, whenever relevant, with the activities of international organisations in the field, in order to ensure international comparability of statistics and consistency of data collections. ***Within the European Union cooperation is necessary with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Outside Europe cooperation should be started with the International Labour Office and World Health Organization.***

Justification

It is important that all information on statistical definitions and methods is used in order to limit the information burden for the Member States and also to use the experiences of these

organisations on the field of collection data on health and safety at work. For example the surveys done by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions on exposures and not only the health outcomes are an excellent tool which should be used by Eurostat.

Amendment 4
Article 7, paragraph 4

4. Every five years Member States shall supply the Commission (Eurostat) with two reports, prepared in conformity with the standards referred to in paragraph 2, on the quality of the data transmitted and the sources of the data. The first report shall concern public health statistics and the second health and safety at work statistics. Every **five** years the Commission (Eurostat) shall draw up a report on the comparability of the data disseminated.

4. Every five years Member States shall supply the Commission (Eurostat) with two reports, prepared in conformity with the standards referred to in paragraph 2, on the quality of the data transmitted and the sources of the data. The first report shall concern public health statistics and the second health and safety at work statistics. Every **two and a half** years the Commission (Eurostat) shall draw up a report on the comparability of the data disseminated.

Justification

It is important to have the comparable information as soon as possible. To keep the pressure on Eurostat and the Member States and because in many Member States the national authorities do not have a system in place to measure health and safety at work the evaluation should be done earlier.