



Chemical accidents: stepping up inspections and public information

Plenary sessions

Sites containing dangerous chemicals will be subject to more regular inspections, under rules approved by MEPs on Thursday. The so-called "Seveso III" legislation also boosts the public's access to information on installations and their emergency plans.

"The Seveso update is a great success, which will increase protection against major accidents involving dangerous substances and ensure citizens have proper access to information", said Richard Seeber (EPP, AT), speaking on behalf of rapporteur János Áder, who recently left Parliament to become President of Hungary.

The new rules were approved with 593 votes in favour, 10 against and 7 abstentions. Having been agreed in negotiations with EU member states, they will be formally approved by the Council and take effect in June 2015.

Inspections

Existing inspection rules have been tightened to ensure higher-risk installations will be inspected at least once a year and lower-risk sites at least every three years. Authorities will make additional checks if there are complaints or evidence of rules not being respected.

To prevent a 'domino effect' of chemical accidents spreading to different areas, public authorities will be entitled to information about neighbouring installations even if they are not covered under Seveso rules.

Public participation

The revised rules guarantee the public's right to understandable, online information about installations and to have their say on issues such as site expansion and emergency planning.

Chemical classifications

The legislation will now follow a new highly-sophisticated chemical classification system based on international standards, which aims to better identify hazards to human health and the environment.

Seveso

The "Seveso" legislation is named after a village in northern Italy, which was affected by a serious accident in a chemical plant in 1976. Around 10,000 installations in the EU fall under the rules, including sites containing potentially dangerous materials such as fireworks and pesticides.

Procedure: Co-decision (1st reading)

Contact :

Christopher COAKLEY

Press release

BXL: (+32) 2 28 44859
STR: (+33) 3 881 76853
PORT: (+32) 498 98 33 26
EMAIL: envi-press@europarl.europa.eu

Paola BUONADONNA

STR: (+33) 3 881 74256
PORT: (+44) 7 786 060 531
EMAIL: Press-en@europarl.europa.eu
EMAIL: paola.buonadonna@europarl.europa.eu
ADDINFO: (+44) 207 227 43 35

Catherine BUNYAN

Tel.: (+353) 1 605 7932
STR: (+33) 3 881 74828
PORT: (+353) 86 855 9423
EMAIL: catherine.bunyan@europarl.europa.eu