

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0378/04  
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to the Commission

Subject: Planned draft second directive on limit values providing for the establishment of an indicative occupational exposure limit value, inter alia for nitrogen monoxide (NO)

Given that the Commission is planning to drastically reduce the occupational exposure limit value for nitrogen monoxide on the recommendation of SCOEL, can it answer the following questions:

1. What is the scientific basis for the proposal that the indicative limit value for nitrogen monoxide in the workplace should be 0.2 ppm?
2. Are conditions in the Member States, above all those in the various branches of industry, including in particular the different types of mining, taken into consideration when setting a limit value, even if it is only an indicative limit value?
3. To what extent are valid epidemiological investigations used when setting an occupational exposure limit value?
4. What method can be used to measure nitrogen monoxide in the order of 0.2 ppm? Can this measurement method also be used underground? Which measurement method was established by the Commission as the available measurement technique, in line with Article 3(2) of the fourteenth individual directive, when it set the limit value for nitrogen monoxide? Has this method been validated?
5. What is the justification for reducing the occupational exposure limit value for nitrogen monoxide by a factor of 125 in comparison with the present limit values in most Member States?
6. Why has nitrogen monoxide been included in the second directive on limit values, although no occupational diseases have been found which are caused by the substance?
7. What is the composition of SCOEL? Who appoints its members, and on what criteria?
8. Did those affected by the directive have an opportunity to put forward their arguments? On what grounds did the Commission reject the arguments of industry and the conclusions of the advisory committee, the SHCMOEI and the sectoral social dialogue committee on mining?