

## II

*(Preparatory Acts)*

## COMMISSION

**Proposal for a Council Directive concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for work with visual display units<sup>(1)</sup>***COM(88) 77 final**(Submitted by the Commission to the Council on 11 March 1988)**(88/C 113/07)*

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 118A thereof,

Having regard to the Commission proposal drawn up after consultation with the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work<sup>(2)</sup>,

In cooperation with the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas Article 118A of the Treaty provides that the Council shall adopt, by means of directives, minimum requirements for encouraging improvements as regards the health and safety of workers, especially in the working environment;

Whereas Article 118A also recommends that Directives shall avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal constraints which would hold back the creation and development of small and medium-sized undertakings;

Whereas the Communication from the Commission on its programme concerning safety, hygiene and health at work<sup>(3)</sup> provides for the adoption of directives designed to guarantee the safety and health of workers;

Whereas Member States have a responsibility to ensure the safety and health of persons on their territory, and of workers in particular;

Whereas Member States' legislative systems differ widely with regard to the prevention of risks relating to work with visual display units (VDUs);

Whereas Council Directive 83/189/EEC of 28 March 1983 lays down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations<sup>(4)</sup>;

Whereas, in order to achieve the maximum degree of protection which is reasonably practicable, it is essential that workers and their representatives be informed of the risks to their safety and health and of the measures required to reduce or eliminate these risks, and be allowed to verify that the necessary protective measures have indeed been taken;

Whereas employers must keep abreast of technological progress in order to provide optimum safety and health protection for their workers;

Whereas the requirements for work with VDUs are essentially expressed in terms of the desired results;

Whereas under the new approach to technical harmonization and standards<sup>(5)</sup> it is desirable to have access to technical reports detailing certain technical specifications;

Whereas a committee composed of members nominated by the Member States needs to be set up to assist the Commission in implementing the supplementary measures provided for by the Directive,

HAD ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

*Article 1*

1. This Directive, which is an individual Directive within the meaning of Article 13 of Directive . . . , lays down minimum safety and health requirements for work with visual display units (VDUs) as defined in Article 2.

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(88) 73 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> Council Decision 74/325/EEC of 27 June 1974.

<sup>(3)</sup> COM(87) 520 final — Council Resolution 88/C28/01 of 21 December 1987 (OJ No C 28, 3. 2. 1988).

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ L 109, 26. 4. 1983, p. 8.

<sup>(5)</sup> Council Resolution of 7 May 1985 (OJ No C 136, 4. 6. 1985).

2. This Directive shall apply to all work stations equipped with a VDU.

It shall not apply to drivers' cabs or control cabs for vehicles or machinery, nor to onboard computer systems.

#### *Article 2*

For the purposes of this Directive, the following terms have the meaning hereby assigned to them:

- 'Visual display unit': an alphanumeric screen, regardless of the display process employed.
- 'Work station': the assembly comprising the display screen, keyboard, peripherals including the printer, the manuscript containing the data, the work chair, the work desk, and the immediate work environment.
- 'Worker': any person using a VDU.

#### *Article 3*

1. Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that VDU work cannot compromise the safety or health of workers.

2. Member States shall ensure that the necessary checks pursuant to paragraph 1 are carried out.

#### *Article 4*

1. Employers shall be obliged to perform an analysis of work stations in order to evaluate the safety and health risks to workers.

2. They shall, where necessary, take appropriate remedial measures in the light of the risks found.

#### *Article 5*

Work stations put into service two years after the entry into force of this Directive shall take into account at least the minimum requirements laid down in the Annex to this Directive.

#### *Article 6*

Existing work stations not covered by Article 5 shall be adapted, in so far as is reasonably possible, to comply with the minimum requirements laid down in the Annex to this Directive.

#### *Article 7*

1. Every worker involved in VDU work shall receive adequate training before commencing this type of work and at regular intervals thereafter.

2. Workers shall receive information on all aspects of health and safety relating to their work station, including the possible effects on their eyes and physical or mental problems.

#### *Article 8*

Workers or their representatives shall be consulted by the employer on the measures taken pursuant to this Directive which concern them directly, and in particular on the measures taken pursuant to Article 6.

#### *Article 9*

Workers shall have an appropriate ophthalmological examination prior to commencing VDU work if they report visual discomforts which may be connected with the work.

The worker shall be provided with special glasses tested for the work concerned if an ophthalmological examination shows that they are required and that glasses intended for normal purposes cannot be used.

#### *Article 10*

1. The Commission shall adapt the Annex to this Directive to take account of technical progress and developments in regulations, giving priority to the European standards.

2. For the purpose of making the adaptations referred to in paragraph 1 the Commission shall be assisted by a committee, following the procedure laid down in Article 14 of Directive ...

#### *Article 11*

1. Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive by 1 January 1991 at the latest and shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.

2. Member States shall communicate to the Commission the texts of the provisions of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive.

Any technical regulations which Member States intend to adopt under this Directive shall be communicated to the Commission at the draft stage in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 8 of Council Directive 83/189/EEC of 28 March 1983 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations.

3. Member States shall report to the Commission every two years on the practical implementation of the provisions of this Directive, indicating the points of view of employers and workers. The Commission shall inform the committee and the tripartite committee.

#### *Article 12*

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

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*ANNEX***MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING WORK WITH VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS (VDUs)****1 Display screen**

The characters on the screen shall be well-defined and clearly formed, of adequate size and with adequate spacing between the characters and lines. The image on the screen should be stable, with no flickering or other forms of instability.

The brightness contrast between the characters and the background shall be easily adjustable by the operator.

The screen shall, as far as reasonably practicable, be rotatable, tiltable and movable to suit the needs of the operator.

**2 Keyboard**

The keyboard shall be separate from the screen so as to allow the worker to find a suitable working position avoiding muscle fatigue in the arms and hands. The space around the keyboard shall be sufficient to provide support for the hands and arms of the operator.

The keyboard shall have a matt surface to avoid reflective glare, the keys shall have low-reflectance surfaces and concave tops.

The symbols on the keys shall be adequately contrasted.

**3 Work desk**

The work desk shall have a sufficiently large, low-reflective surface and allow a flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and related equipment.

The document holder shall be situated on the desk on the same level as the display screen to minimize the need for rapid head and eye movements.

Adequate leg space is necessary.

**4 Work chair**

The work chair shall be stable but allow the worker easy freedom of movement.

The seat height shall be adjustable, and all chairs shall have back rests adjustable in height and tilt. The possible need for a footrest shall be taken into account.

**5 Lighting**

Suitable ambient lighting is required so as to provide satisfactory working conditions and an appropriate contrast between the screen and the background environment.

Lamps for secondary activities shall be provided where necessary, they shall be adjustable but shall not cause glare or reflections on the screen.

**6 Reflections and glare**

A VDU shall be positioned so that neither the screen nor the operator are facing a window. Windows shall be fitted with a suitable system of adjustable covering.

**7 Noise**

The printer shall be placed where it does not distract attention or disturb speech.

**8 Humidity**

An adequate level of humidity shall be established and maintained.

**9 Operator/computer interface**

The psycho-social factors applicable to work on screen and program writing (software development) shall be taken into account.

The principles of software ergonomics shall be applied in particular to human data processing and decision-making capacities.

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