

Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/85/EEC

of 19 October 1992

on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

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 proposal from the Commission, drawn up after consultation with the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at work<sup>(1)</sup>,

In cooperation with the European Parliament<sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee<sup>(3)</sup>,

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

Whereas this Directive does not justify any reduction in levels of protection already achieved in individual Member States, the Member States being committed, under the Treaty, to encouraging improvements in conditions in this area and to harmonizing conditions while maintaining the improvements made;

Whereas, under the terms of Article 118a of the Treaty, the said directives are to avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal constraints in a way which would hold back the creation and development of small and medium-sized undertakings;

Whereas, pursuant to Decision 74/325/EEC<sup>(4)</sup>, as last amended by the 1985 Act of Accession, the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health protection at Work is consulted by the Commission on the drafting of proposals in this field;

Whereas the Community Charter of the fundamental social rights of workers, adopted at the Strasbourg European Council on 9 December 1989 by the Heads of State or Government of 11 Member States, lays down, in paragraph 19 in particular, that:

Every worker must enjoy satisfactory health and safety conditions in his working environment. Appropriate measures must be taken in order to achieve further harmonization of conditions in this area while maintaining the improvements made;

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Whereas the Commission, in its action programme for the implementation of the Community Charter of the fundamental social rights of workers, has included among its aims the adoption by the Council of a Directive on the protection of pregnant women at work;

Whereas Article 15 of Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work<sup>(5)</sup> provides that particularly sensitive risk groups must be protected against the dangers which specifically affect them;

Whereas pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding must be considered a specific risk group in many respects, and measures must be taken with regard to their safety and health;

Whereas the protection of the safety and health of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or workers who are breastfeeding should not treat women on the labour market unfavourably nor work to the detriment of directives concerning equal treatment for men and women;

Whereas some types of activities may pose a specific risk, for pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or workers who are breastfeeding, of exposure to dangerous agents, processes or working conditions; whereas such risks must therefore be assessed and the result of such assessment communicated to female workers and/or their representatives;

Whereas, further, should the result of this assessment reveal the existence of a risk to the safety or health of the female worker, provision must be made for such worker to be protected;

Whereas pregnant workers and workers who are breastfeeding must not engage in activities which have been assessed as revealing a risk of exposure, jeopardizing safety and health, to certain particularly dangerous agents or working conditions;

Whereas provision should be made for pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or workers who are breastfeeding not to be required to work at night where such provision is necessary from the point of view of their safety and health;

Whereas the vulnerability of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding makes it necessary for them to be granted the right to maternity leave of at least 14 continuous weeks, allocated before and/or after confinement, and renders necessary the compulsory nature of maternity leave of at least two weeks, allocated before and/or after confinement;

Whereas the risk of dismissal for reasons associated with their condition may have harmful effects on the physical and mental state of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding; whereas provision should be made for such dismissal to be prohibited;

Whereas measures for the organization of work concerning the protection of the health of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or workers who are breastfeeding would serve no purpose unless accompanied by the maintenance of rights linked to the

employment contract, including maintenance of payment and/or entitlement to an adequate allowance;

Whereas, moreover, provision concerning maternity leave would also serve no purpose unless accompanied by the maintenance of rights linked to the employment contract and or entitlement to an adequate allowance;

Whereas the concept of an adequate allowance in the case of maternity leave must be regarded as a technical point of reference with a view to fixing the minimum level of protection and should in no circumstances be interpreted as suggesting an analogy between pregnancy and illness,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE

## SECTION I

### PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

#### *Article 1*

##### **Purpose**

1 The purpose of this Directive, which is the tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC, is to implement measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding.

2 The provisions of Directive 89/391/EEC, except for Article 2 (2) thereof, shall apply in full to the whole area covered by paragraph 1, without prejudice to any more stringent and/or specific provisions contained in this Directive.

3 This Directive may not have the effect of reducing the level of protection afforded to pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding as compared with the situation which exists in each Member State on the date on which this Directive is adopted.

#### *Article 2*

##### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Directive:

- (a) *pregnant worker* shall mean a pregnant worker who informs her employer of her condition, in accordance with national legislation and/or national practice;
- (b) *worker who has recently given birth* shall mean a worker who has recently given birth within the meaning of national legislation and/or national practice and who informs her employer of her condition, in accordance with that legislation and/or practice;
- (c) *worker who is breastfeeding* shall mean a worker who is breastfeeding within the meaning of national legislation and/or national practice and who informs her employer of her condition, in accordance with that legislation and/or practice.

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## SECTION II

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### *Article 3*

##### **Guidelines**

1 In consultation with the Member States and assisted by the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work, the Commission shall draw up guidelines on the assessment of the chemical, physical and biological agents and industrial processes considered hazardous for the safety or health of workers within the meaning of Article 2.

The guidelines referred to in the first subparagraph shall also cover movements and postures, mental and physical fatigue and other types of physical and mental stress connected with the work done by workers within the meaning of Article 2.

2 The purpose of the guidelines referred to in paragraph 1 is to serve as a basis for the assessment referred to in Article 4 (1).

To this end, Member States shall bring these guidelines to the attention of all employers and all female workers and/or their representatives in the respective Member State.

#### *Article 4*

##### **Assessment and information**

1 For all activities liable to involve a specific risk of exposure to the agents, processes or working conditions of which a non-exhaustive list is given in Annex I, the employer shall assess the nature, degree and duration of exposure, in the undertaking and/or establishment concerned, of workers within the meaning of Article 2, either directly or by way of the protective and preventive services referred to in Article 7 of Directive 89/391/EEC, in order to:

- assess any risks to the safety or health and any possible effect on the pregnancies or breastfeeding of workers within the meaning of Article 2,
- decide what measures should be taken.

2 Without prejudice to Article 10 of Directive 89/391/EEC, workers within the meaning of Article 2 and workers likely to be in one of the situations referred to in Article 2 in the undertaking and/or establishment concerned and/or their representatives shall be informed of the results of the assessment referred to in paragraph 1 and of all measures to be taken concerning health and safety at work.

#### *Article 5*

##### **Action further to the results of the assessment**

1 Without prejudice to Article 6 of Directive 89/391/EEC, if the results of the assessment referred to in Article 4(1) reveal a risk to the safety or health or an effect on the pregnancy or breastfeeding of a worker within the meaning of Article 2, the employer shall take the necessary measures to ensure that, by temporarily adjusting the working conditions and/or the working hours of the worker concerned, the exposure of that worker to such risks is avoided.

2 If the adjustment of her working conditions and/or working hours is not technically and/or objectively feasible, or cannot reasonably be required on duly substantiated grounds, the employer shall take the necessary measures to move the worker concerned to another job.

3 If moving her to another job is not technically and/or objectively feasible or cannot reasonably be required on duly substantiated grounds, the worker concerned shall be granted leave in accordance with national legislation and/or national practice for the whole of the period necessary to protect her safety or health.

4 The provisions of this Article shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the case where a worker pursuing an activity which is forbidden pursuant to Article 6 becomes pregnant or starts breastfeeding and informs her employer thereof.

#### *Article 6*

### **Cases in which exposure is prohibited**

In addition to the general provisions concerning the protection of workers, in particular those relating to the limit values for occupational exposure:

1. pregnant workers within the meaning of Article 2 (a) may under no circumstances be obliged to perform duties for which the assessment has revealed a risk of exposure, which would jeopardize safety or health, to the agents and working conditions listed in Annex II, Section A;
2. workers who are breastfeeding, within the meaning of Article 2 (c), may under no circumstances be obliged to perform duties for which the assessment has revealed a risk of exposure, which would jeopardize safety or health, to the agents and working conditions listed in Annex II, Section B.

#### *Article 7*

### **Night work**

1 Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that workers referred to in Article 2 are not obliged to perform night work during their pregnancy and for a period following childbirth which shall be determined by the national authority competent for safety and health, subject to submission, in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Member States, of a medical certificate stating that this is necessary for the safety or health of the worker concerned.

2 The measures referred to in paragraph 1 must entail the possibility, in accordance with national legislation and/or national practice, of:

- a transfer to daytime work; or
- b leave from work or extension of maternity leave where such a transfer is not technically and/or objectively feasible or cannot reasonably be required on duly substantiated grounds.

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### *Article 8*

#### **Maternity leave**

1 Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that workers within the meaning of Article 2 are entitled to a continuous period of maternity leave of a least 14 weeks allocated before and/or after confinement in accordance with national legislation and/or practice.

2 The maternity leave stipulated in paragraph 1 must include compulsory maternity leave of at least two weeks allocated before and/or after confinement in accordance with national legislation and/or practice.

### *Article 9*

#### **Time off for ante-natal examinations**

Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that pregnant workers within the meaning of Article 2 (a) are entitled to, in accordance with national legislation and/or practice, time off, without loss of pay, in order to attend ante-natal examinations, if such examinations have to take place during working hours.

### *Article 10*

#### **Prohibition of dismissal**

In order to guarantee workers, within the meaning of Article 2, the exercise of their health and safety protection rights as recognized under this Article, it shall be provided that:

1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the dismissal of workers, within the meaning of Article 2, during the period from the beginning of their pregnancy to the end of the maternity leave referred to in Article 8(1), save in exceptional cases not connected with their condition which are permitted under national legislation and/or practice and, where applicable, provided that the competent authority has given its consent;
2. if a worker, within the meaning of Article 2, is dismissed during the period referred to in point 1, the employer must cite duly substantiated grounds for her dismissal in writing;
3. Member States shall take the necessary measures to protect workers, within the meaning of Article 2, from consequences of dismissal which is unlawful by virtue of point 1.

### *Article 11*

#### **Employment rights**

In order to guarantee workers within the meaning of Article 2 the exercise of their health and safety protection rights as recognized in this Article, it shall be provided that:

1. in the cases referred to in Articles 5, 6 and 7, the employment rights relating to the employment contract, including the maintenance of a payment to, and/or entitlement to an adequate allowance for, workers within the meaning of Article 2, must be ensured in accordance with national legislation and/or national practice;
2. in the case referred to in Article 8, the following must be ensured:
  - (a) the rights connected with the employment contract of workers within the meaning of Article 2, other than those referred to in point (b) below;
  - (b) maintenance of a payment to, and/or entitlement to an adequate allowance for, workers within the meaning of Article 2;
3. the allowance referred to in point 2 (b) shall be deemed adequate if it guarantees income at least equivalent to that which the worker concerned would receive in the event of a break in her activities on grounds connected with her state of health, subject to any ceiling laid down under national legislation;
4. Member States may make entitlement to pay or the allowance referred to in points 1 and 2 (b) conditional upon the worker concerned fulfilling the conditions of eligibility for such benefits laid down under national legislation.

These conditions may under no circumstances provide for periods of previous employment in excess of 12 months immediately prior to the presumed date of confinement.

#### *Article 12*

### **Defence of rights**

Member States shall introduce into their national legal systems such measures as are necessary to enable all workers who should themselves wronged by failure to comply with the obligations arising from this Directive to pursue their claims by judicial process (and/or, in accordance with national laws and/or practices) by recourse to other competent authorities.

#### *[<sup>F1</sup>Article 13*

### **Amendments to Annex I**

The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 13a to make strictly technical amendments to Annex I, in order to take account of technical progress, changes in international regulations or specifications and new findings.

Where, in duly justified and exceptional cases involving imminent, direct and serious risks to workers' and other persons' physical health and safety, imperative grounds of urgency require action in a very short timeframe, the procedure provided for in Article 13b shall apply to delegated acts adopted pursuant to this Article.]

#### **Textual Amendments**

- F1** Substituted by [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1243 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 adapting a number of legal acts providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny](#)

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to Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Text with EEA relevance).

### *F<sup>2</sup> Article 13a*

#### **Exercise of the delegation**

1 The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission subject to the conditions laid down in this Article.

2 The power to adopt delegated acts referred to in Article 13 shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of five years from 26 July 2019. The Commission shall draw up a report in respect of the delegation of power not later than nine months before the end of the five-year period. The delegation of power shall be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months before the end of each period.

3 The delegation of power referred to in Article 13 may be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council. A decision to revoke shall put an end to the delegation of the power specified in that decision. It shall take effect the day following the publication of the decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union* or at a later date specified therein. It shall not affect the validity of any delegated acts already in force.

4 Before adopting a delegated act, the Commission shall consult experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making<sup>(6)</sup>.

5 As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council.

6 A delegated act adopted pursuant to Article 13 shall enter into force only if no objection has been expressed either by the European Parliament or the Council within a period of two months of notification of that act to the European Parliament and the Council or if, before the expiry of that period, the European Parliament and the Council have both informed the Commission that they will not object. That period shall be extended by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or of the Council.

#### **Textual Amendments**

- F2** Inserted by Regulation (EU) 2019/1243 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 adapting a number of legal acts providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny to Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Text with EEA relevance).

### *Article 13b*

#### **Urgency procedure**

1 Delegated acts adopted under this Article shall enter into force without delay and shall apply as long as no objection is expressed in accordance with paragraph 2. The notification of a delegated act to the European Parliament and to the Council shall state the reasons for the use of the urgency procedure.



2 Either the European Parliament or the Council may object to a delegated act in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 13a(6). In such a case, the Commission shall repeal the act immediately following the notification of the decision to object by the European Parliament or by the Council.]

**Textual Amendments**

**F2** Inserted by Regulation (EU) 2019/1243 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 adapting a number of legal acts providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny to Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Text with EEA relevance).

*Article 14*

**Final provisions**

1 Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive not later than two years after the adoption thereof or ensure, at the latest two years after adoption of this Directive, that the two sides of industry introduce the requisite provisions by means of collective agreements, with Member States being required to make all the necessary provisions to enable them at all times to guarantee the results laid down by this Directive. They shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.

2 When Member States adopt the measures referred to in paragraph 1, they shall contain a reference of this Directive or shall be accompanied by such reference on the occasion of their official publication. The methods of making such a reference shall be laid down by the Member States.

3 Member States shall communicate to the Commission the texts of the essential provisions of national law which they have already adopted or adopt in the field governed by this Directive.

F<sup>3</sup>4 .....

F<sup>3</sup>5 .....

F<sup>3</sup>6 .....

**Textual Amendments**

**F3** Deleted by Directive 2007/30/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2007 amending Council Directive 89/391/EEC, its individual Directives and Council Directives 83/477/EEC, 91/383/EEC, 92/29/EEC and 94/33/EC with a view to simplifying and rationalising the reports on practical implementation (Text with EEA relevance).

*Article 15*

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

## ANNEX I

NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF AGENTS, PROCESSES AND WORKING CONDITIONS  
referred to in Article 4 (1)

## A. Agents

1. *Physical agents* where these are regarded as agents causing foetal lesions and/or likely to disrupt placental attachment, and in particular:
  - (a) shocks, vibration or movement;
  - (b) handling of loads entailing risks, particularly of a dorsolumbar nature;
  - (c) noise;
  - (d) ionizing radiation<sup>(7)</sup>;
  - (e) non-ionizing radiation;
  - (f) extremes of cold or heat;
  - (g) movements and postures, travelling — either inside or outside the establishment — mental and physical fatigue and other physical burdens connected with the activity of the worker within the meaning of Article 2 of the Directive.

[<sup>F4</sup>2. Biological agents

Biological agents of risk groups 2, 3 and 4 within the meaning of points 2, 3 and 4 of second paragraph of Article 2 of Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>(8)</sup>, in so far as it is known that such agents or the therapeutic measures necessitated by them endanger the health of pregnant women and the unborn child, and in so far as they do not yet appear in Annex II.]

**Textual Amendments**

- F4** Substituted by [Directive 2014/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 amending Council Directives 92/58/EEC, 92/85/EEC, 94/33/EC, 98/24/EC and Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, in order to align them to Regulation \(EC\) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.](#)

## 3. Chemical agents

The following chemical agents in so far as it is known that they endanger the health of pregnant women and the unborn child and in so far as they do not yet appear in Annex II:

- (a) [<sup>F4</sup>substances and mixtures which meet the criteria for classification under Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>(9)</sup> in one or more of the following hazard classes and hazard categories with one or more of the following hazard statements, in so far as they do not yet appear in Annex II:
  - germ cell mutagenicity, category 1A, 1B or 2 (H340, H341);
  - carcinogenicity, category 1A, 1B or 2 (H350, H350i, H351);
  - reproductive toxicity, category 1A, 1B or 2 or the additional category for effects on or via lactation (H360, H360D, H360FD, H360Fd, H360Df, H361, H361d, H361fd, H362);

- specific target organ toxicity after single exposure, category 1 or 2 (H370, H371);]
- (b) [F<sup>4</sup>chemical agents in Annex I to Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>(10)</sup>;
- (c) mercury and mercury derivatives;
- (d) antimitotic drugs;
- (e) carbon monoxide;
- (f) chemical agents of known and dangerous percutaneous absorption.

[F<sup>4</sup>B. Processes

Industrial processes listed in Annex I to Directive 2004/37/EC.]

C. Working conditions

Underground mining work.

## ANNEX II

### NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF AGENTS AND WORKING CONDITIONS referred to in Article 6

#### A. Pregnant workers within the meaning of Article 2 (a)

##### 1. Agents

###### (a) Physical agents

Work in hyperbaric atmosphere, e.g. pressurized enclosures and underwater diving.

###### (b) Biological agents

The following biological agents:

- toxoplasma,
- rubella virus,

unless the pregnant workers are proved to be adequately protected against such agents by immunization.

###### (c) Chemical agents

Lead and lead derivatives in so far as these agents are capable of being absorbed by the human organism.

##### 2. Working conditions

Underground mining work.

#### B. Workers who are breastfeeding within the meaning of Article 2 (c)

##### 1. Agents

###### (a) Chemical agents

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Lead and lead derivatives in so far as these agents are capable of being absorbed by the human organism.

2. Working conditions

Underground mining work.

Statement of the Council and the Commission concerning Article  
11 (3) of Directive 92/85/EEC, entered in the minutes of the  
1608th meeting of the Council (Luxembourg, 19 October 1992)

THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION stated that:

In determining the level of the allowances referred to in Article 11 (2) (b) and (3), reference shall be made, for purely technical reasons, to the allowance which a worker would receive in the event of a break in her activities on grounds connected with her state of health. Such a reference is not intended in any way to imply that pregnancy and childbirth be equated with sickness. The national social security legislation of all Member States provides for an allowance to be paid during an absence from work due to sickness. The link with such allowance in the chosen formulation is simply intended to serve as a concrete, fixed reference amount in all Member States for the determination of the minimum amount of maternity allowance payable. In so far as allowances are paid in individual Member States which exceed those provided for in the Directive, such allowances are, of course, retained. This is clear from Article 1 (3) of the Directive..

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- (1) [OJ No C 281, 9.11.1990, p. 3](#); and [OJ No C 25, 1.2.1991, p. 9](#).
- (2) [OJ No C 19, 28.1.1991, p. 177](#); and [OJ No C 150, 15.6.1992, p. 99](#).
- (3) [OJ No C 41, 18.2.1991, p. 29](#).
- (4) [OJ No L 185, 9.7.1974, p. 15](#).
- (5) [OJ No L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1](#).
- (6) [<sup>F2</sup>[OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1](#).]
- (7) See Directive 80/836/Euratom ([OJ No L 246, 17.9.1980, p. 1](#)).
- (8) [<sup>F4</sup>Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work (seventh individual directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) ([OJ L 262, 17.10.2000, p. 21](#)).]
- (9) [<sup>F4</sup>Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 ([OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1](#)).]
- (10) [<sup>F4</sup>Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (Sixth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Council Directive 89/391/EEC) ([OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 50](#)).]

#### Textual Amendments

- F2** Inserted by [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1243 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019](#) adapting a number of legal acts providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny to Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Text with EEA relevance).
- F4** Substituted by [Directive 2014/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014](#) amending Council Directives 92/58/EEC, 92/85/EEC, 94/33/EC, 98/24/EC and Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, in order to align them to Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.