

# Seveso III Directive transposed into law

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The EU Seveso Directive (82/501/EC) was adopted in 1982 following an industrial accident in the Italian town of Seveso. The aim of the directive was to create a common European policy on the prevention of major industrial accidents involving dangerous chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment. In 2012 the EU Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EC) was adopted, replacing the EU Seveso II Directive (96/82/EC). The updated directive took into account the changes in EU legislation regarding the classification of chemicals and increased rights for citizens to access information and justice.

Decree-Law 105/2015 transposes the Seveso III Directive into Italian law. It makes no substantive changes to existing rules; instead, it aims to improve their coherence and clarity and improve coordination with EU legislation.

The main changes include the following:

- The list of chemicals covered by the directive has been updated, in particular under EU Regulation 1272/2008 on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures. The changes may lead to a variation in the number and type of establishments to which the regulation applies.
- A mechanism has been introduced that allows for derogation from the regulation in cases where a substance that is dangerous in principle is not a risk in practice.
- New rules have been introduced regarding the 'domino effect' – that is, a situation in which the probabilities or consequences of an accident are greater due to the location of an industrial establishment (eg, its proximity with other industrial establishments).
- The rights of citizens to access information and participate in the decision-making process have been strengthened.
- Adjustments have been made to the division of powers among central government and local authorities. In particular, the Ministry of the Environment will have an increased coordination role and be responsible for exchanging information with EU institutions and other member states, as well as the uniform application of norms at a national level. In this regard, a coordination body composed of representatives of central and local administrations and high-level technical institutions will be created. Regions will be in charge of carrying out inspections and controls, while municipalities will promote citizen information and participation.

There are separate compliance deadlines for new and existing establishments.

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