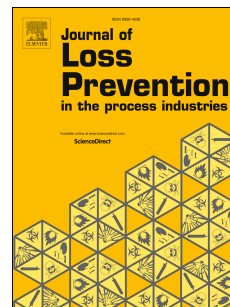


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SEVESO INSPECTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN LOW COUNTRIES

History, implementation, and effectiveness of the European Seveso Directives in Belgium and the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

The Seveso legislation regulates the prevention of major accidents in which hazardous substances are involved in Europe. It is trans-national legislation that has to be translated into national law in every European Member State. This article investigates how this Seveso legislation is implemented in Belgium and the Netherlands and discusses the history and effectiveness in the European Low Countries. Furthermore, the inspection approach for these specific regulations in both Member States is described and analysed.

Keywords: *inspection, Seveso legislation, chemical industry, Low Countries*

1. INTRODUCTION**1.1. The European Seveso legislation**

Regulation is one of the defining features of modern society. More than a century ago, the French sociologist Emile Durkheim stated that modern industrial society is highly differentiated, and laws should coordinate this diversity to protect public interests (Durkheim, 1893). These laws do not necessarily correspond to a deeply held sentiment in society, they are expedient to achieve public policy goals to protect workers, local residents and so forth.

Safety regulation is about regulation of risk, and differs from many other kinds of regulation. Society gains an advantage from industrial activities. It is very difficult to separate these activities from the

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