

Preventing occupational cancer in Europe

Stefan Olsson
European Commission
Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Protecting workers

- Cancer is the first cause of work-related deaths in the EU
- 52% of annual work-related deaths are due to cancer, compared to 24% due to circulatory illnesses and 2% due to injuries
- Carcinogenic substances can also cause other serious health problems, e.g. chronic beryllium disease

Working together with Member States

- The Union supports and complements the activities of the Member States for the protection of workers' health and safety (art. 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union)
- Minimum level of protection across the EU – Member States can adopt more protective measures:
 - EU OSH Framework Directive 89/391/EEC
 - Chemical Agents Directive 98/24/EC
 - Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive 2004/37/EC
 - Asbestos Directive 2009/37/EC


Benefits of occupational exposure limit values (OELs)

- Indicate level of exposure considered to be safe (*health based*) or appropriate (*where feasibility factors also taken into consideration*)
- Define a common objective for employers, workers and enforcement agencies
- Provide a benchmark for new users and designers of process plants
- Provide a "level playing field" for all users – promote consistency and fair competition

"Legislation alone is not enough"

Marianne Thyssen



- Need to improve **enforcement and implementation** at the workplaces, in particular in small and micro companies
-  - exchange of best practices among businesses, government bodies and workers organisations
- **Social Partner Agreements**, e.g. NEPSI (European Network on Silica, formed in 2006)



Guidance and awareness raising

- EU-OSHA campaign on dangerous substances 2018-2019
- Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) - facilitate and promote better enforcement:
 - Guide on asbestos
 - Guide on respirable crystalline silica
 - Thematic Day on Carcinogens and Mutagens, 8-9 October 2018
- Industry own initiatives



**EUROBAT 'Blood
Lead Mitigation
Programmes'**

State of the Union 2018

- ***Priority 4: A deeper and fairer Internal Market with a strengthened industrial base***

Initiatives for delivery before the European Parliament elections

****** Adoption by the co-legislators of the proposals addressing the social dimension of the European Union, notably the proposals on: [...] protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (second and third revisions) [...]***



Thank you
for your
attention!

Stefan Olsson
European Commission
Phone: ++32 229-53569
Email: Stefan.Olsson@ec.europa.eu