

## Activating European industries and sectors in the fight against exposure to carcinogens in the workplace

Cancer is the leading cause of work-related mortality in the European Union. Identifying smart solutions and sharing good practices between businesses and organizations could make a tremendous difference in reducing workers' exposure to carcinogens. The Roadmap on Carcinogens<sup>1</sup>, established by BusinessEurope and others, encourages and helps businesses, organizations, industries and others to raise awareness and share knowledge on how to tackle exposure to carcinogens in the workplace. One of the main aims of the Roadmap is to share good practices between companies and organisations. While many initiatives have already been undertaken, there is an existing need to do more. Amongst others, there is a need for increased targeted dissemination of what is already known on reducing exposure to carcinogens between relevant stakeholders at all levels.

### ***Roadmap objectives***

The Roadmap on Carcinogens has established four goals. First, it aims to create awareness amongst European businesses and workers on the risks of exposure to carcinogenic substances and the need for preventive action. Second, to provide help to businesses and workers in preventing exposure to carcinogens on the work floor and minimize its effect on the workforce. Third, its goal is to engage industry and sectors and increase the involvement of relevant parties to multiply the efforts throughout Europe. Fourth, it targets innovation to bridge the gap between research findings and businesses' needs. To reach these goals, four pillars of strategy have been found, including twelve challenges.

### ***Stakeholder mobilisation***

Mobilising stakeholders in this matter is important as many organisations play a part in the prevention of exposure to cancer causing agents. The Roadmap wants to seek cooperation and mobilise those important stakeholders if needed. Cross-industry and sectoral organizations play a significant role to their members in raising awareness, in assisting businesses as well as in developing specific practical guidance and dedicated solutions or instruments. Challenge 3.1<sup>2</sup> of the Roadmap looks into how these

#### ***Best practice example: The NEPSI Social Dialogue Agreement and Good Practice Guide***

The NEPSI Social Dialogue Agreement was established to protect the health of those occupationally exposed to respirable crystalline silica. Main industries in the European Union associated with the exposure to respirable silica agreed on appropriate measures for the improvement of working conditions through the application of good practice.

NEPSI focuses on good practice implementation in workplaces, to reduce workers' exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust. The NEPSI Good Practice Guide draws example from many companies.

The established European Network on Silica provides guidance to small and micro enterprises, trainings for new workers using the latest technologies, standardized RCS measurement methodology, and good implementation thanks to a reporting system on Key Performance Indicators.

<sup>1</sup> [Roadmap - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Challenge 3.1: Engaging industry and sectors - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

industries and sectors can be engaged more and support companies as much as possible. Within this challenge, the Roadmap aims at activating sectors to develop their own solutions and feed into the Roadmap, not only with initial ideas, but also with practical details on how to implement these solutions.

### ***Funding possibilities***

It is known that different organisations, like Member States, industries or sector organisations, national social security insurance initiatives and others, already have funds or specific fiscal measures in place that can stimulate businesses to invest in occupational safety and health. Nevertheless, often, businesses and organisations are not aware of the financial opportunities and support measures that already exist. In line, the aim of challenge 2.3<sup>3</sup> is to gain more insight into financial possibilities and opportunities that exist.

#### ***Needs from businesses to address carcinogens in the workplace: The case of Spain***

Spanish companies identified that aid to companies should focus firstly on raising awareness about carcinogens in the workplace as well as developing more knowledge on how regulations on carcinogens will affect them. The existence of technical advisory committees, open to sectoral employer organisations, could play a pivotal role in the latter.

Secondly, mutual insurance companies were identified as key stakeholders in assisting companies by offering them prevention advice on the one hand and producing good training tools on the other hand. More support however is needed for enabling the exchange of information and experiences between different companies.

Thirdly, access to adequate funding and incentives are crucial in order to carry out technical studies, implement targeted health surveillance protocols and implement needed investments in the installation of up-to-date systems.

### ***Take part in the challenge of tackling workers' exposure to carcinogens***

Despite significant work already done to tackle the problem of workers' exposure in the fight against carcinogens, there is still a need for more insight, knowledge and action, and we all share this responsibility. Among others, there is a great role for the industry sector organisations to share their insights and knowledge, as well as interact with other stakeholders to gain knowledge of best practices of others. Therefore, we strongly incentivize everyone to play their part in this challenge.

On Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, several Roadmap partners will organise a joint online workshop in line with challenge 3.1 on the important role of (cross-)sectoral organisations in supporting and encouraging the companies in their network to take measures against exposure to carcinogens. The workshop seeks to find out to what extent sectoral organisations can work together with the Roadmap on Carcinogens and exchange some good practices in view of formulating follow-up actions for the coming years. In addition, the workshop will focus on best practices in terms of safe working procedures, in line with challenge 4.3<sup>4</sup>, and on the financing of measures to prevent workers getting

<sup>3</sup> [Challenge 2.3: Funds for businesses - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Challenge 4.3: Safe working procedures - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

exposed to carcinogens, in line with challenge 2.3. The workshop builds on the previous workshop given in Brussels in May 2019<sup>5</sup>.

Please do not hesitate to send an email to Isaline Ossieur ([i.ossieur@businesseurope.eu](mailto:i.ossieur@businesseurope.eu)) on interesting actions or plans you have executed, or are planning to.

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<sup>5</sup> Slides-set of Conference 15 May 2019 on 'How to help businesses and workers to tackle exposure to carcinogens on the shop floor. the vital role of cross-industry and sectoral organisations.': [Microsoft PowerPoint - 15MayBrussels Roadmapevent Proceedings.pptx \(roadmaponcarcinogens.eu\)](#)