



NEPSI Signatories Press Release

Council and European Parliament reach agreement on first wave revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive

The Directive introduces in its Annex I “work involving exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust generated by a work process” and sets a Binding Occupational Exposure Limit Value (BOELV) of 0.1 mg/m³ for respirable crystalline silica. The NEPSI Agreement is recognised as a valuable and necessary instrument to support its implementation.

On 11 July 2017, the COREPER voted an agreement reached by the Council presidency, the European Commission and the European Parliament on the revision of the 2004 Directive to protect the workers from exposure to carcinogens or mutagens in the workplace. The new text now must be formally adopted by the Council and the European Parliament.

The directive sets exposure limits for a further 11 carcinogens in addition to those covered by the existing 2004 directive, among which a BOELV for Respirable Crystalline Silica generated by a work process at 0.1 mg/m³. Article 18a specifies that the European Commission will evaluate the need to modify this limit value as part of the next evaluation of the implementation of the Directive¹.

NEPSI signatories acknowledge the European Binding Limit Value which aims at protecting workers and defines a clear level playing field across the EU.

Recital 6 of the Directive acknowledges the role of the Good Practices of the Social Dialogue *"Agreement on Workers' Health Protection Through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products Containing it"* (the so-called NEPSI Agreement) as a valuable and necessary instrument to complement the regulatory requirements and to support their effective implementation.

NEPSI Social Partners are grateful for this positive recognition which reinforces their desire to continue working together for enhanced workers' health protection. They would strongly encourage an express recognition of the role of good practices such as those of NEPSI in future amendments of the Directive as necessary instrument to facilitate compliance and support implementation of the Directive's requirements, which would help to maintain and develop this highly valuable Social Dialogue Agreement.

The NEPSI Social Dialogue Agreement was signed ten years ago by a diverse group of industries and the unions representing their workforce [see list of signatories below]. Together, the signatories formed NEPSI, the European Network on Silica, to implement effective protection measures through good practices and closely monitor the application of the Agreement through bi-annual reports of key performance indicators. This is the first European multi-sectoral agreement.

¹ ref. Article 17a of framework directive 89/391/EEC

The NEPSI Agreement successfully leads to lower levels of exposure to respirable crystalline silica through the spreading of Good Practices. As Commissioner Marianne Thyssen highlighted on the occasion of the Agreement tenth anniversary: “Setting limit values through EU legislation is instrumental in protecting workers' health but it is the quality of implementation and enforcement that will determine whether lives are saved.”

NEPSI social partners count on the support of the European Institutions to maintain and continue to develop this highly effective social dialogue agreement.

Brussels, 13 July 2017

NEPSI signatories:

BIBM – The International Bureau for Precast Concrete

CAEF – European Foundry Association

CEEMET - European employers' organisation of the metal, engineering and technology-based industries

CEMBUREAU – The European Cement Association

Cerame-Unie - The European Ceramic Industry Association

EMO – European Mortar Organization

ERMCO – European Ready Mixed Concrete Organisation

EURIMA - -The European Insulation Manufacturers Association

EUROMINES – The European Association of Mining Industries

EUROROC - European Federation of Natural Stone Industries

EXCA – The European Expanded Clay Association

ECSPA – European Calcium Silicate Producers Association (voluntary)

FEVE – The European Container Glass Federation

GlassFibreEurope – The European Glass Fibre Producers Association

GLASS FOR EUROPE – Trade association for Europe's manufacturers of building, automotive and transport glass

IMA-Europe – The European Industrial Minerals Association

UEPG – European Aggregates Association

industriAll – European Trade Union

See www.nepsi.eu for more information.