

Better protection for workers from cancer-causing substances: Council reaches agreement

Today, the EPSCO Council reached an agreement which will guarantee the protection of more than 4 million workers from exposure to carcinogens or mutagens in the workplace.

The President of the Council, Ms Helena Dalli said "With this agreement, we can better protect millions of EU workers from cancer-causing chemical substances in the work place. This is particularly important given that cancer is the first cause of work-related deaths in the EU."

The proposed directive seeks to introduce stricter limits on exposure values and skin notations for five carcinogens as well as skin notations independently of limit values for two more carcinogens, covering seven carcinogens in total.

The carcinogenic and mutagenic substances covered by the directive are the following: Mineral Oils that have been used before in internal combustion engines, certain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) mixtures, trichloroethylene, 4,4'-methylenedianiline, epichlorohydrine, ethylene dibromide, ethylene dichloride.

Background information

The Commission submitted in January 2017 the proposed revision which concerns in particular annexes I and III of directive 2004/37/EC.

The retained limit values are based on an analysis of economic, social and environmental impacts of the different policy options for each chemical agent, on the criteria of the scientific advice of the scientific committee on occupational exposure limits (SCOEL), effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.

The limit values were also agreed by the advisory committee on health and safety at work (ACSH).

This revision follows an earlier Commission proposal which already included 13 carcinogenic agents.

A further package of proposed limit values is expected to be adopted by the Commission at the beginning of next year.

[General approach on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work](#)