



NEPSI Signatories Press Release

The European Parliament adopts on 25 October 2017 the 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 of 0.1 mg/m³ for respirable crystalline silica. The NEPSI Agreement is recognised as a valuable and necessary instrument to support its implementation.

The directive was approved on 25 October in plenary session of the European Parliament by 540 votes to 6 against, with 119 abstentions. Once endorsed by the Council, the new rules will be published in the EU Official Journal and will enter into force 20 days after publication. After publication, Member States will have two years to transpose the directive in their national laws.

In his speech preceding the vote, shadow rapporteur Claude Rolin (EPP) said: "I commend the social partners who, in a preventive approach, negotiate sectoral agreements aiming to better protect the workers from carcinogenic agents. The NEPSI Agreement is an excellent example and I can only hope that others will follow the same way. In the field of health & safety at work, the keywords must be “prevention and dialogue.”

The directive sets exposure limits for a further 11 carcinogens in addition to those covered by the existing 2004 directive. This includes a Binding Occupational Exposure Limit Value 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 to protect workers and defines a clear level playing field across the EU.

Recital 19 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"** (known as the NEPSI Agreement) as a valuable and necessary instrument to complement these new regulatory requirements and support their effective implementation.

NEPSI Social Partners are grateful for this positive recognition, it reinforces their commitment to continue working together to enhance workers' health protection.

For consideration in future amendments of the Directive, they strongly encourage an explicit recognition of the role of good practices such as those of NEPSI, as necessary instruments to facilitate compliance and support implementation of the Directive's requirements.

This would help to maintain and develop this highly valuable Social Dialogue Agreement.

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

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.

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, 27 October 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.