



26 March 2021

European Parliament votes to stop cancer at work and include hazardous drugs and reprotoxins in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD)

Stop Cancer at Work Campaign calls on the European Commission to work with the Parliament and Council to legislate now to prevent workplace cancer

The European Parliament voted on 25 March to support the Stop Cancer at Work campaign's demands for:

- Legislative action - not just guidance – now, not next year or the year after.
- Specifically, the European Commission should include hazardous drugs (hazardous medicinal products or HMPs) in Annex I, and reprotoxins, in the CMD.
- This legislative action should be supported by new guidance to ensure that effective prevention measures are put in place and implemented across Europe.

The Stop Cancer at Work Campaign believes that the European Commission should now get on with including hazardous drugs, reprotoxins and other improvements to the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD) passed by the Parliament without any further delay. Legislation to include hazardous drugs is not only supported by the Parliament but also the majority of the Member States that make up the European Council.

The Commission has still not published an independent report which was completed last year and supports legislation to include hazardous drugs (HMPs), in the current revision of the CMD. This would be in combination with, but not replaced by, new non- legislative EU guidance and a regular review of a list of HMPs based on an agreed definition. The independent report is based on a year-long consultation with Member States, experts, professionals, patients, employers and workers in healthcare and justifies and delivers a consensus, impact assessment and blueprint to legislate now and prevent exposure of workers and patients to hazardous drugs which cause cancer and reproductive problems.

Employers and trades unions representing the healthcare sector (HOSPEEM and EPSU) have recently written to Commissioner Nicolas Schmit expressing their surprise that the report has not yet been published, asking him to publish it now before the trilogue and reminding him that they both support the inclusion of hazardous drugs in Annex I of the CMD.

ENDS

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The Stop Cancer at Work Campaign:

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME),
European Association of Pharmacy Technicians (EAPT)
European Biosafety Network (EBN)
European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC)
European Federation of Nursing Associations (EFN)
European Public Service Union (EPSU)
European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO),
The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)

As a coalition of essential trades unions, healthcare professionals and cancer patients, the Campaign is demanding action from policymakers and political leaders to stop further preventable deaths. The European Commission's own research shows that at least 40% of cancer cases are avoidable - but we have yet to see meaningful change and very little on preventing workplace cancer in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

The scale of the problem is vast: it is estimated that 100,000 new deaths each year of work related cancer from occupational exposure to hazardous substances, the biggest killer in the EU. The European Commission's own research shows that at least 40% of cancer cases are avoidable. The protective equipment, safer technology and proper practices are available and not costly but employers are unlikely to universally introduce them unless they are required to do so.