EU-OSHA joins the fight against occupational cancer at Austrian EU Presidency conference [1]

24/09/2018 - 01:00

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On 24 - 25 September, the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU [2] is hosting a high-level conference, Fight against Occupational Cancer [3], in Vienna. A range of speakers and participants, including politicians, social partners and experts in the field explore ways of protecting Europe’s workers from exposure to carcinogens at work.

We believe that by informing and educating workers and employers — and offering practical solutions — we can reduce and even eliminate exposure to carcinogens at work, thereby preventing needless suffering and deaths from cancer.

The conference provides an overview of current challenges, presents latest developments and ongoing initiatives. Aspects addressed range from the European perspective to simple measures and practical solutions suitable for implementation within companies. In workshops, participants will have the opportunity to discuss risk-based approaches, workplace risk management and health monitoring, and campaigning activities.

At the conference EU-OSHA presents the 2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Campaign [4] and chairs a session that looks at good practice, policy and awareness raising initiatives such as the EU Roadmap on Carcinogens [5]. This action scheme informs about the risks from exposure to carcinogens and how to tackle them by finding practical solutions and sharing good practices. Started in 2016 under the Netherlands EU Presidency, the roadmap's next destination is Helsinki, with the forthcoming Finnish EU Presidency announcing to support the scheme in 2019.

Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility states that "the Roadmap is a very welcome initiative to ensure that our ambitious agenda launched to update the protection against exposure to carcinogens is applied on the work floor throughout the EU".

“Protection against carcinogenic substances is also of particular concern to Austria. Our mutual goal is to reduce the number of victims now and in the future. Therefore a joint and strong approach to this problem at European level is required,” says Beate Hartinger-Klein, Austrian Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection.

“At the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), we are working to highlight the scale of the problem and the importance of preventing exposure to carcinogens at work as part of our current campaign, Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances [4]”, says Director Christa Sedlatschek. “We believe that by informing and educating workers and employers — and offering practical solutions — we can reduce and even eliminate exposure to carcinogens at work, thereby
preventing needless suffering and deaths from cancer.”

EU-OSHA’s work in the field includes a report and summary on the Exposure to carcinogens and work-related cancer: a review of assessment methods [6]. Events within the roadmap scheme are summarised in the Fighting cancer at the workplace seminar - EU roadmap on carcinogens [7] and the Workshop ‘Carcinogens and Work-Related Cancer’ [8].

Find out more about the conference [3]

Explore the issue of workplace carcinogens [9]

Visit the EU Roadmap on Carcinogens website [5]

Notes to editor: 1.

The Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2018-19, Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances, aims to raise awareness of dangerous substances in the workplace and disseminate information about how exposure can be prevented. The campaign is coordinated at national level by EU-OSHA’s focal points and supported by official campaign and media partners and the Enterprise Europe Network. It has five main objectives:

- To raise awareness of the relevance and importance of managing dangerous substances in Europe’s workplaces.
- To promote risk assessment, elimination and substitution by providing practical tools and examples of good practice.
- To raise awareness of the risks of exposure to carcinogens by supporting the exchange of good practices.
- To target specific groups of workers who are at greater risk, by providing tailored facts and figures and guidance on good practice.
- To increase awareness of developments in policy and legislation, by providing a plain language overview of the existing legislation and guidance.

Following the launch on 24 April 2018, campaign highlights include the European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work (October 2018 and 2019) and the Good Practice Exchange Event (early in 2019). The campaign concludes with the Good Practice Awards Ceremony and Healthy Workplaces Summit (both in November 2019). Hosted by EU-OSHA in Bilbao, these events offer a chance for those who have taken part to celebrate the campaign’s successes and reflect on what has been learned.

2. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. The Agency researches, develops, and distributes reliable, balanced, and impartial safety and health information and organises pan-European awareness raising campaigns. Set up by the European Union in 1994 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency brings together representatives from the European Commission, Member State governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations, as well as leading experts in each of the EU Member States and beyond.

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http://osha.europa.eu [16]