

ROADMAP AMSTERDAM-VIENNA: A VOLUNTARY ACTION SCHEME ON GOOD PRACTICES TO PREVENT AND DEAL WITH RISKS ARISING FROM OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO CARCINOGENS

The importance of European limit values

European limit values are important to prevent and deal with risks arising from occupational exposure to carcinogens

Limit values contribute to protecting employees and preventing/limiting health damage due to (excessive) exposure to hazardous substances in Europe.

Limit values are also supported by employers as part of creating a level playing-field across the EU. At the same time, employers may face challenges in developing prevention measures and implementing limit values.

Reinforcing prevention in companies, including SMEs

- The implementation of risk assessment based on limit values when possible and risk management measures will be enhanced if parallel initiatives are developed to assist employers, employees and their representatives in this field.
- The following elements are important:
 - Providing employers information about the limit values and raising awareness of employers and employees of the risks of exposure to carcinogens
 - Providing employers information about risk assessment methods and when feasible possible risk management measures
 - Facilitating learning by employers and employees of existing good practices.
- In various Member States good practices are available on concrete measures to help implement limit values for companies, including SMEs, Different types of good practices exist; e.g. risk assessment tools, technical prevention, sectoral industry approaches, and on prevention culture.
- Facilitating the exchange of information about good practices is an efficient and effective way to help companies and workers.
- In particular smaller companies and member states without or limited good practices will benefit from this initiative.
- It could lead to a stimulus to innovate in terms of production processes, where possible and appropriate to replace carcinogenic substances when safe alternatives are available and to develop new prevention measures

A joint effort for a voluntary action scheme on good practices

- Member States, social partners, companies, research organisations and other organisations are invited to announce their foreseen initiatives and/or willingness to cooperate with other organisations as part of the Roadmap;
- The two EU-presidencies in 2016 (Netherlands) and 2019 (Austria), the European Agency for Safety and Health at work (and its focal point network), and the European social partners as main stakeholders act



as an accelerator/facilitator for this voluntary but important process. Other member states, non-EU countries or private organisations may want to join.

- A listing of activities for the next 3 years will be set up (The Roadmap). The first proposals will be announced at the Dutch presidency conference in 23-25 of May.

Ideas to be elaborated and implemented

- The ambition of the scheme is that activities start as soon as possible. A 'flying start' is important as well as to have some results on a short term. Interested parties are invited to join in and take up activities on a voluntary basis.
- The parties or organisations involved are those that can deliver or communicate good practices.
- This scheme is not meant to make legislative proposals or organise enforcement activities.
- EU-OSHA is important as it can facilitate communication on the campaign (e.g. by publishing the list of activities), and aligning it with the campaign in 2018/2019 on dangerous substances.
- 2016 is the starting point of the campaign, and 2019 the end. Further:
 - each year a joint event will be organised by one (or a combination of) partners with (some) support of the EU-OSHA. Not only Member States, but also (European and/or national) social partners and (large) companies or sectors can take the lead. This event will provide an overview of activities or results;
 - in 2019 there will be an event as part of the Austrian presidency.
- The following types of activities could be developed and implemented:
 - promoting risk awareness with employers and employees (current campaigns and making information material accessible, developing new campaigns and information), in particular in SMEs;
 - influencing behaviour and culture at the work floor;
 - list and describe a number of good (technical) practices specifically for the carcinogenic substances in question and feasible for SMEs;
 - collecting and making these good/cost-efficient practices accessible;
 - Member States and organisations/consortia can propose to fulfil some sort of mentor/partnership by taking the lead on specific parts of the action scheme. For example around specific/groups of carcinogens, sectors or applied technologies.

Voluntary campaign as a roadmap

- The incoming Austrian presidency (first half 2019) will pay attention to this subject during its presidency period. This will serve as an endpoint or destination of this Roadmap 'Amsterdam-Vienna'.