

**FIEC** is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 32 National Member Federations in 27 countries (24 EU, Norway, Switzerland & Ukraine) construction enterprises of all sizes, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises as well as “global players”, carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities.



# POSITION PAPER

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## Screening and registering asbestos in buildings

### FIEC contribution to the call for evidence

- FIEC considers that screening measures before demolishing or renovating buildings built before the (national) asbestos ban, together with a registration system, are effective ways to allow companies to take the right steps and reduce the risk of workers' exposure to asbestos.
- For that purpose, **clients (i.e. homeowners or project owners), who commission the demolition or renovation work, should bear the responsibility of such screening** and therefore benefit from financial incentives.
- As the certification and/or registration of specialised companies, and the screening protocols can diverge from one country or from one region to another, this can lead to results which are not always comparable. But this can also be explained by the divergences as regards the initial national and/or regional situations.
- In any case, to avoid unnecessary pollution, screening protocols should ensure that the integrity of asbestos-containing materials is preserved, unless a specific intervention is required. Whenever it appears necessary to take samples in order to detect hidden asbestos, this should be done according to the state of the art.
- National approaches can also take different perspectives: in some countries, there is a case-by-case approach in order to focus on the most relevant and problematic situations, while in other countries, there is a more systematic approach along the life-cycle of a building. Both ways have their benefits and challenges. It must namely be taken into consideration the potentially huge technical, human and economic resources that screening schemes may require.
- Moreover, the screening issue is closely linked to the removal of asbestos, and hence, to the management of hazardous waste. FIEC support proposals that can further improve the handling of hazardous waste. Basically, construction companies need a greater availability and affordability of adapted waste facilities for asbestos at their regional/local level. Moreover, considering the amount of asbestos waste which will be collected in the near future, it is time to find more sustainable waste treatment solutions.
- **As regards the setup of a (centralised and/or digital) registration system, it should be under the responsibility of each Member State.**
- **All in all, FIEC supports the idea that each Member State should put in place an overall national strategy in order to progress towards an “asbestos-safe” future. In any case, the European Commission should base its future proposal on the existing national and regional schemes, to build on existing knowledge and avoid putting these schemes at risk.**
- Moreover, FIEC believes that it is important to increase the level of awareness and training for safe removal of asbestos based on existing and already proven methods.
- **This speaks for a flexible EU framework for screening and registration of asbestos in buildings, to be set up under the responsibility of each Member State.**

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