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JOINT STATEMENT FOR AN EU-WIDE IMPLEMENTABLE FRAMEWORK ON ASBESTOS EXPOSURE AT WORK INCLUDING STRONG ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

Following last week's release of the draft report on the *Asbestos at Work* Directive by the EMPL Committee in the European Parliament, the *European Construction Industry Federation* (FIEC) and the *European Builders Confederation* (EBC) emphasise the importance and prioritisation of workers' health in the sector. In view of the alignment of institutional stances regarding a decrease of the occupational exposure limit value (OELV) pursuant to the airborne concentration of asbestos at work sites, FIEC and EBC reiterate that this is not a silver bullet for an optimal protection of workers and ask for strong measures of financial, technical and training support in a realistic transition towards the new legislative framework.

Throughout the legislative process of the revision of Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work, much political interest has focused on the modification of the OELV. FIEC and EBC welcome the alignment of MEP Trillet-Lenoir's (Renew, France) proposal with the Commission's proposal for an exposure limit value of 0.01 fibres/cm³, as well as with the general approach adopted by the Council of the EU. As a matter of fact, FIEC and EBC recall that only a limit that allows for realistic implementation, monitoring and evaluation by construction companies - reinforced by national measures of technical support and general guidance towards the new framework - will be able to produce optimal protection conditions for the workforce of the sector.

In this context, FIEC and EBC share **common recommendations**, in light of the **draft report by Rapporteur V. Trillet-Lenoir** in the Employment and Social affairs Committee (EMPL):

- **Lowering the OELV below the value put forward by the European Commission's proposal would be unrealistic** and counterproductive;
- The draft report features an **improved** approach with regard to **training**. However, more ambition is needed regarding the **financial support to companies and homeowners to assess the presence of asbestos** to reduce the risks upfront, thereafter, **proceeding with its removal**;

- A 3-years transition period is not enough for construction companies and must be extended; the **7-year transition period proposed unanimously by the Council is more realistic**;
- **A revision clause at the short or medium term would be highly counterproductive** as it would trigger uncertainty among businesses;
- **A too strict certification scheme or other additional administrative weights might close the market**, in times where all construction companies are needed to deliver the *Renovation Wave*;
- A Directive on the **screening and registration of asbestos is being developed as a singular legislative vehicle** and should not be anticipated, although consistency will be required;
- Increasing **technical and financial support for training, awareness-raising, and exchange of best practices** on asbestos removal for both employers and workers, and inspectors, is necessary;
- Construction enterprises need a facilitated access and **appropriate number of adapted waste facilities for asbestos** within an acceptable distance and cost, including cross-border.

FIEC and EBC look forward to cooperating with the European institutions to identify the best ways to help construction companies minimise risks related to asbestos and maximise the protection of our workers.

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About FIEC and EBC

The *European Construction Industry Federation* ([FIEC](#)) is the officially recognised Social Partner, representing employers, in the European sectoral Social Dialogue "Construction". Based in Brussels, FIEC represents - via its 32 national member federations in 27 countries (24 EU & Norway, Switzerland, and 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.

Since 1990, the *European Builders Confederation* ([EBC](#)) is the European professional organisation representing national employer associations of construction micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and crafts. EBC is part of the employers' delegation in the European sectoral Social Dialogue "Construction". EBC is a member of *SMEunited*, the European association of SMEs, and founding partner of *Small Business Standards* (SBS), the European association representing SMEs in standardisation.