

FIEC and EBC call for realistic occupational exposure limit on asbestos and strong accompanying measures

Following the adoption of the Villumsen report on asbestos at work by the European Parliament earlier this week, the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and the European Builders Confederation (EBC) state that workers' health is indeed a top priority for the sector. At the same time, they fear that the new Occupation exposure limit (OEL) proposed in the report might be too low and not practicably applicable based on the reality of the market. Instead, priority should be given to strong preventive and accompanying measures.

FIEC and EBC stress that the revision of biological or binding occupational exposure limit values should be realistic, as their application depend on whether it is feasible for employers to measure and implement them. If companies are not able to apply limit values, they will not be able to protect workers as intended. Bearing in mind that many small and even micro construction enterprises will be affected by these measures on asbestos, it is important to ensure that the legislation can be implemented by companies of all sizes in all Member States: this is how we will make sure that there is a level playing field for workers' protection across the European Union.

For that reason, FIEC and EBC together call the European Commission to base its future actions on sound scientific evidence, a thorough assessment of technical and economic feasibility and an analysis of the consequent socio-economic impact, for which the role of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health (ACSH) is central. These future actions must also depend on the availability of common measurement methods, to ensure that there is a level playing field across the EU.

Moreover, FIEC and EBC believe that before setting a new OEL the European Commission's action should focus more on preventive and accompanying measures to eliminate or minimise risks, such as:

- Strengthening the technical and financial assistance support for homeowners to assess the presence of asbestos in their dwellings in order to reduce the risks upfront.
- Developing specific treatment protocols on asbestos for disposal/removal operators of construction/demolition waste.
- Increasing technical and financial support for training, awareness-raising and exchange of best practices on asbestos removal for both employers and workers.
- Ensuring that construction enterprises can access an appropriate number of adapted waste facilities for asbestos within an acceptable distance, including cross-border.

FIEC and EBC look forward to further cooperating with the European institutions to identify the best ways to help construction companies minimise risks related to asbestos.



■ Notes to editors

Founded in 1905, the **European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC)** is representing via its 33 National Member Federations in 29 countries (25 EU & Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, Turkey) 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. FIEC is the officially recognised Social Partner, representing employers, in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue "Construction".

Established in 1990, the **European Builders Confederation (EBC)** is a European professional organisation representing national associations of crafts, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises working in the construction sector. EBC is a member of SMEUnited (the European association of micro-enterprises and SMEs) and Small Business Standards (the European association of SMEs in the standardisation community).

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■ Further information

More information on [FIEC](#) and [EBC](#) can be found on the linked webpages.