



29 March 2021

Stop Cancer at Work Campaign calls on European Commission to get on with including hazardous drugs in legislation now

Inclusion of hazardous drugs in EU legislation supported by the European Parliament, majority of Member States and consensus of stakeholders and responses to independent report published by the European Commission today

The Stop Cancer at Work Campaign believes that the European Commission should now get on, without any further delay, including hazardous drugs in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD) - as outlined in the independent report published today. Legislation to include hazardous drugs is not only supported by the European Parliament but also, according to the report, the majority of the Member States that make up the European Council.

The independent report is based on consultation over the last year with Member States, experts, professionals, patients, industry and employers and trades unions in healthcare, and confirms that the vast majority support the only legislative option in the report to include hazardous drugs, or hazardous medicinal products (HMPs), in Annex I of the CMD, in combination with new non legislative guidance and a regular review of a list of HMPs based on an agreed definition. The independent report provides the necessary scientific evidence, stakeholder consultation and consensus, impact assessment and justification for the co-legislators to proceed now to approve this legislative option.

The European Parliament overwhelmingly voted on 25 March to support the Stop Cancer at Work campaign's demands for legislative action now – not just guidance – to include hazardous drugs (HMPs) in Annex I of the CMD. Inclusion of hazardous drugs in the CMD is the only legislative option outlined in the independent report published today to prevent exposure of workers to deadly hazardous drugs. Legislation is the best and only way to deliver the necessary certainty and, as the report says, to strengthen compliance with the CMD. The Parliament also supported the Campaign's demands to extend the CMD to include reprotoxins, and other improvements, and the report makes clear that half of the identified HMPs are only reprotoxic so would not otherwise be covered.

Inclusion of hazardous drugs in Annex I and reprotoxins in the title of the CMD will prevent the occupational exposure of workers and patients in healthcare to carcinogenic, mutagenic and reprotoxic drugs, which cause workplace cancer and reproductive problems and result in their unnecessary deaths and harm to those exposed.

ENDS

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Study supporting the assessment of different options concerning the protection of workers from exposure to hazardous medicinal products, including cytotoxic medicinal products – March 2021

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148&langId=en>

The Stop Cancer at Work Campaign:

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME),
European Association of Pharmacy Technicians (EAPT)
European Biosafety Network (EBN)
European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC)
European Federation of Nursing Associations (EFN)
European Public Service Union (EPSU)
European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO),
The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)

As a coalition of essential workers, professionals and cancer patients, the Campaign is demanding action from policymakers and political leaders to stop further preventable deaths. The European Commission's own research shows that at least 40% of cancer cases are avoidable - but we have yet to see meaningful change and very little on preventing workplace cancer in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

The scale of the problem is vast: it is estimated that 100,000 new deaths each year of work related cancer from occupational exposure to hazardous substances, the biggest killer in the EU. The European Commission's own research shows that at least 40% of cancer cases are avoidable. The protective equipment, safer technology and proper practices are available and not costly but employers are unlikely to universally introduce them unless they are required to do so.

