



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2018) 5325 final*

*Ms Regina BASTOS
Chair of the European Affairs Committee
Assembleia da República
Palácio de S. Bento
P – 1249-068 LISBOA*

*cc. Mr Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES
President of the
Assembleia da República
Palácio de S. Bento
P – 1249-068 LISBOA*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council amending Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work {COM(2018) 171 final}.

This proposal forms part of a broader package of ambitious actions of the Juncker Commission to deliver on the key principle of the European Pillar on Social Rights of workers' right to healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment. Improving workers' health by reducing occupational exposure to carcinogenic chemical agents is also one of the actions stated in the Commission Communication on 'Safer and Healthier Work for All'¹.

Cancer is still the main cause of work-related deaths in the European Union. In this context, amending Directive 2004/37/EC by setting new limit values for priority carcinogens and mutagens to improve protection of workers from cancer-causing chemicals has become a continuous process. The proposed Directive is the third legislative amendment and sets binding occupational exposure limit values for five priority carcinogens, in addition to those set in the two previous proposals addressing 20 carcinogens. Introducing these exposure limit values will lead to fewer cases of work-related cancer, and also limit other important health problems caused by carcinogenic and mutagenic substances.

The Commission is pleased that the Assembleia da República shares the view that action at the EU level is required to achieve the objectives of this proposal.

¹ *Communication on 'Safer and Healthier Work for All – Modernisation of the EU Occupational Safety and Health Legislation and Policy' {COM(2017) 12 final}.*

The action against cancer caused by occupational exposure is a common concern for the Commission and the Member States. In this context, the Commission welcomes the Portuguese integrated and proactive approach aiming at the protection of workers exposed to carcinogens, and in particular those initiatives that facilitate compliance with the national legislation transposing the Directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work.

The Opinion of the Assembleia da República has been made available to relevant Commission services. The proposal is currently in the legislative process involving the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached in the near future.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Assembleia da República in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Member of the Commission*