



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 15.9.2017  
C(2017) 6060 final*

*Dear Chair,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Hrvatski sabor for its Opinion on the proposals for Directives of the European Parliament and of 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 (2016) 248 final and COM(2017) 11 final}.*

*The proposals aim to improve workers' health protection by reducing occupational exposure to carcinogenic chemical agents, to provide more clarity and to contribute to a level playing field for economic operators.*

*In proposing these measures, the Commission is making good on the promise in its 2016 Work Programme to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the European Union framework for protecting workers. The intention is also to continue this important work and to conduct further impact assessments with a view to proposing limit values for additional carcinogens.*

*The Commission took a first step to address these issues by adopting, on 13 May 2016, the proposal amending Directive 2004/37/EC with a view to revise or to introduce exposure limit values for 13 chemical agents. On 10 January 2017 the Commission took a further step in a longer-term process of updating that Directive with regard to seven more carcinogens and proposes to establish limit values and/or skin notations. According to the impact assessment accompanying the proposal this is estimated to result in increased protection for at least four million workers and improved clarity for employers and enforcers. Together it is estimated that both proposals would prevent over 100,000 deaths caused by work-related cancer.*

*The Commission is pleased that the Hrvatski sabor supports action at European Union level as envisaged in the proposals in order to improve health protection by reducing occupational exposure to carcinogenic chemicals.*

*The Hrvatski sabor's Opinion has been made available to the Commission's representatives in the ongoing negotiations with the co-legislators. Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators concerning the proposals are now underway and the Commission remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached in the near future.*

*Ms. Ines STRENJA- LINIC  
Chair of the Health and Social Policy  
Committee of the Hrvatski sabor  
Trg sv. Marka 6  
HR – 10 000 ZAGREB*

*cc: Mr Gordan JANDROKOVIĆ  
Speaker of the Hrvatski sabor  
Trg sv. Marka 6  
HR – 10 000 ZAGREB*

*Regarding the specific issue of formalin (formaldehyde) raised in the Opinion, the Commission would like to stress that the current two proposals amending Directive 2004/37/EC do not contain any measures specific to this chemical. However, the Commission is assessing formaldehyde with a view to addressing it in the already planned third amendment of Directive 2004/37/EC. It is anticipated that employers who implement good working practices in the use of formaldehyde would be able to comply with the limit value and, in accordance with the general provisions of the Directive, this should not result in the mandatory removal of the use of formaldehyde from pathology and histology laboratories.*

*The Commission is grateful for the input provided by the Hrvatski sabor and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen  
Member of the Commission*