



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2016) 6568 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 to amend 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}.

This proposal is among the priority actions identified in the Commission Work Programme for 2016. It fits with the Commission's priority to promote a fair European labour market that provides workers with decent protection and sustainable jobs, as well as with the strategic goal set out in the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020¹ of ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for workers in the EU.

An initiative on occupational cancer has been a welcome priority for the Netherlands Presidency as well as for the Commission. A new 'Roadmap to Vienna'² Covenant was agreed at the end of May by Dutch and Austrian ministries, the Commission, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and social partners, which presents a commitment to support in practice efforts to limit exposures to carcinogens.

The proposed Directive aims to prevent occupational cancer – the largest cause of worker deaths in the EU, to increase the effectiveness of the EU legislation in this area and to provide more clarity and a better level playing field for economic operators. To that effect, it identifies certain cancer-causing chemicals and sets 13 specific occupational exposure limit values.

¹ COM(2014) 332 final:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0332&from=EN>

² <https://roadmaponcancerogens.eu/>.

The Commission is pleased that the Assembleia da República shares the view that the setting of substance-specific minimum requirements in the form of occupational exposure limit values in Directive 2004/37/EC increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal framework and welcomes the conclusion that the proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council in which the Portuguese government is represented.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen
Member of the Commission*