

## PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM ASBESTOS



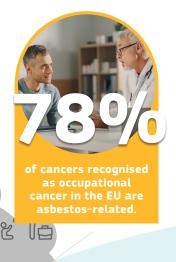
September 2022 #AsbestosFreeEurope #SocialRights #EUCancerPlan

## What is asbestos and why do we need to act?

- Asbestos is a highly dangerous, cancer-causing substance.
- The main threat to human health occurs when materials that contain asbestos are disturbed and **fibres can be released in the air and inhaled**, like when old buildings are renovated.
- All use of asbestos has been banned in the EU since 2005. But asbestos is still present in many buildings, posing a risk to residents and workers, mainly in construction.
- Addressing the health risks of exposure to asbestos is **essential to protect people's health and the environment** as well as ensure **decent living and working conditions**.
- This is ever more urgent given the EU's ambition to double the annual rate of energy renovations
  of buildings by 2030, which are responsible for more than one third of energy-related greenhouse
  qas emissions.

The Commission is acting to **achieve an asbestos-free Europe** for current and future generations.

The actions we take now will have a strong positive health impact in the decades to come and will contribute to **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**.











11

European Pillar of Social Rights

Principle 10: Healthy, safe and welladapted work environment and data protection "Workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work."

## How can we better protect people from asbestos and achieve an asbestos-free future?

The Commission sets out existing and new measures to tackle the issue of asbestos, covering the following areas:

- Supporting victims of asbestos-related diseases
  - consulting the tripartite
    Advisory Committee on
    Safety and Health at Work
    on including additional
    asbestos-related diseases
    as occupational diseases
  - proposed update to the Council Recommendation on cancer screening
  - launching the European
     Cancer Imaging Initiative

- Protecting workers against exposure to asbestos
  - lowering the current occupational exposure limit to asbestos
  - offering **guidelines** on implementation
  - launching an awareness-raising campaign on the safe removal of asbestos aimed at companies, workers, owners and public administrations

- Addressing asbestos present in buildings
  - legislative proposal on the screening and registration of asbestos in buildings
  - developing national asbestos removal strategies
  - introducing digital building logbooks

- Ensuring safe disposal of asbestos waste and zero pollution
  - revising the protocol and guidelines on construction and demolition waste management

Providing EU financing support to Member States for better health prevention and treatment as well as renovations and the safe removal of asbestos; and

Positioning the EU as a global leader in the fight against asbestos together with international partners.

The Commission proposes to **amend the Asbestos at Work Directive** to reduce the occupational exposure limit for asbestos to **10 times lower than the current value**(from 0.1 fibres per cubic centimetre (f/cm<sup>3</sup>) to 0.01 f/cm<sup>3</sup>).

This allows for a more uniform protection of workers across the EU on the basis of the latest scientific and technological developments. It also creates a level playing field for businesses and prevents higher healthcare costs for medical treatment in the future.

