Female worker in warehouse © Steve Debenport

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Press release | 25.10.2017

Revised directive will help reduce workplace cancer

Occupational Health

The European Parliament has today voted on the final agreement on the revision to the directive on limiting exposure to carcinogens and mutagens at work.

Jean Lambert, Greens/EFA coordinator for the Employment Committee, comments:

"Workplaces have to be safe, not just from physical hazards but from exposure to toxic substances. It is great that this directive is being brought up to speed, which will help to save lives across the EU.

"Diseases often develop many years after the exposure to toxic substances. That's why it is so important that medical provision can now be extended until after the end of the exposure.

"We have long demanded that the European Commission assess the need to include substances that affect reproduction in EU legislation and we are delighted that they have now committed to doing this before spring 2019."

Background

This is the first of a series of proposals to limit exposure to various carcinogens and mutagens in employment. The second batch was presented by the Commission in January and a third will follow in 2018.

The key changes under the revision are:

- Lower occupational exposure limits have been introduced for chromium VI and hard wood dust
- The Commission will have to assess the need of including reprotoxic substances in EU legislation by the first quarter of 2019 at the latest
- A doctor or authority responsible for the health surveillance of workers within member states may indicate that health surveillance of the worker must continue after the end of exposure for as long as they consider it necessary to safeguard the health of the worker concerned

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