

MARIANNE THYSSEN
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels,

Dear Mr. Semolič,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April 2015 regarding the prevention of occupational cancer resulting from exposure to chemical agents and the different levels of protection that currently exist across the EU.

I share your concern and your assessment of the seriousness of the problem. My department is working actively on a potential European initiative to step up the prevention of occupational cancer in the EU. In particular, my department, in close cooperation with the Working Party on Chemicals, the specialised working group of the tripartite Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work, is working on a potential amendment to Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work. Although Directive 2004/37/EC establishes a comprehensive set of measures to prevent exposure to carcinogens and mutagens in the workplace, an expanded list of occupational exposure limit values may prove necessary to address new and emerging risks. In order to collect the additional information to complete the impact assessment needed to substantiate the amendment, the Commission plans to commission an external study during 2015.

Further to that external study and to the results of the ongoing ex-post evaluation of 24 EU Occupational Safety and Health Directives, including Directive 2004/37/EC, the Commission will finalise an impact assessment report before putting forward a proposal to amend that Directive.

I wish to reassure you that the Commission will take all points of relevance into consideration with a view to adopting the measures needed to step up the prevention of occupational cancer at European level and, in particular, to amend Directive 2004/37/EC to include binding occupational limit values for a larger number of chemical substances.

Yours faithfully



Dušan Semolič
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