

RETHINKING EUROPE'S APPROACH TO HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

CEMBUREAU's Feedback to the EU's consultation for a Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027

Brussels, 09/03/2021 – CEMBUREAU, the European Cement Association (www.cembureau.eu), welcomes the upcoming EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027.

The cement industry commits to high standards of health and safety for its workers and in the neighbourhoods around its factories. The industry is committed to 'Zero Harm' amongst its workers and contractors with continuous improvement of health and safety practices, behaviours and processes towards a healthy and safe working culture.

The EU cement sector is involved in the collection of safety key performance indicators (KPIs), targeted guidance, reporting and sharing of good practice like NEPSI, the Sectoral Social Dialogue on Respirable Crystalline Silica, or the EU-OSHA Healthy Workplace Campaign Partnership on MSD, and shared recommendation and information addressed to the sector over the COVID-19 pandemic, all part of the process of a healthy and safe working culture. Learn more at <https://cembureau.eu/policy-focus/health-safety/>.

For CEMBUREAU, it is important to learn from the prior Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020, from challenges faced to success achieved. The key point on occupational health and safety from policy to management and operations is to continuously improve together for a culture wise of a safer and healthier workplace.

The recent sanitarian and economic context over the COVID-19 pandemic, changed the working context to which companies had to adapt for the Health and Safety of their workers as the priority one. To overcome certain barriers, further prioritisation and simplification of OSH legislation, reducing burden, and a more extensive exchange of good practices will help in the proposed work at EU level, strengthening the current work of the European Commission and its agencies like EU-OSHA.

In addition, some relevant points could be highlighted for the next Strategy such as:

- ✓ Anticipation and managing changes for companies can be facilitated with a coordinated support at European and national level of initiatives, studies, assessments, data collections, guidance, good practices, social dialogue, incentives/funds, and training.
- ✓ More visibility and representation should be made for occupational safety and health standards in the world to share a European approach to work.
- ✓ Continuation of preventing work-related diseases and accidents should be at the core of the Strategic framework supported by evidence-based studies and assessment, consultations, guidance, exchange of good practices and training.
- ✓ Promotion of social dialogue good practices, complementing regulatory measures like NEPSI – The Sectoral Social Dialogue "Agreement on Workers' Health Protection Through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products – and the revision of legislation (i.e. CMD and CAD) on the basis of scientific evidence, technical feasibility and analysis of socio-economic impact and accurate data collections are striving improvements.

- ✓ Improvement of the interplay between OSH and REACH: It is also acknowledging the role of OSH and setting of OELVs, when this has been identified as the best risk management option to tackle concerns at the workplace. This relates to clarifying the interface between REACH and OSH legislation and improving the predictability and consistency of Risk Management Option Analyses through clear criteria.
- ✓ Improvement of OSH strategies at national level, focused on implementation record, prevention of accidents and work-diseases in SMEs and micro-enterprises, and demographic changes.
- ✓ Communication and information over EU Committees, Agencies, Platforms and Meetings with sharing of relevant guidance from social partners and from companies on the ground, can help facilitate the application of EU rules.
- ✓ COVID-19 has highlighted the need for better synergy between public health and OSH. This could be done by improving the understanding outside the OSH world of the dynamic risk-based approach, hierarchy of prevention, OSH procedures and structures.
- ✓ Emerging risks in workplaces and new work activities have to be assessed for a common understanding and approach within future initiatives. This will help contribute to a OSH culture, support companies and employees with guidance and training for adapting to these risks, and transforming challenges into opportunities for the benefits of workers and employers.
- ✓ Synergies with other EU policies are necessary, including more streamlined policies and common work to respond to the pandemic context, new infectious diseases and new risks. For example, adding social and digital dimensions to the European Green Deal, the European Pillar for Social Rights Action Plan and the future OSH Strategy Framework, coordinating approaches and actions, avoiding overlapping and redundancy, and involving all relevant stakeholders over their applications.

CEMBUREAU looks forward to contributing to the future Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027, from its design to its actions.
