



## EP protects workers from asbestos! Now it is time for the European Commission to make its move!

The EFBWW welcomes that yesterday the European Parliament plenary adopted, by a large majority of 675 in favour to two votes against and 23 abstentions, the legislative report on Protecting Workers from Asbestos (the “Villumsen report”) and called for a concrete asbestos Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) of 1000 fibres/m<sup>3</sup>. This is a strong signal to the European Commission (EC). The EFBWW urges the EC to immediately make legislative proposals in line with the EP demands.

EFBWW general secretary, Tom Deleu: “This is a ground-breaking victory for all the construction workers, firefighters, miners, and workers in cleaning or waste disposal, who are regularly exposed to asbestos. We now call on the EC to follow the steps of the EP and legislate accordingly. Anything less than this will be unacceptable and an offense to workers and citizens’ confidence in the EU.”

The EP has agreed on an ambitious report: a European Strategy for the Removal of All Asbestos (ESRAA) with national asbestos removal programmes and public asbestos registries, support to homeowners, a revision of the EU Asbestos at Work Directive (AWD), better recognition and compensation for asbestos victims, and provisions for safe disposal of asbestos waste. All of this is in line with the EFBWW demands for better EU rules on asbestos.

The importance of these issues was visible today at the demonstration organised by the EFBWW in front of the EP building in Strasbourg (France), which brought together construction workers, firefighters and trade unions from several countries.

Asbestos is still present in an estimated 35 million buildings in the EU – buildings that will be renovated or demolished by workers in the course of the EU’s Building Renovation Wave to reach the climate targets. In EU 28, 3.17 million people have died in the last 40 years as a consequence of inhaling asbestos fibres. It is time to stop this number from rising.

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**The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)** is the European Workers’ Industry Federation for the following sectors: building, woodworking, forestry and allied industries and trades. The EFBWW has 76 affiliated unions in 35 countries and represents a total of 1,500,000 members.