



Chairman of Verkhovna Rada (Head of Ukrainian Parliament)  
Mr. Dmytro Razumkov  
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Head of the Committee on Public Health, Medical Assistance and  
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Mr. Mykhailo Radutskyi  
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23 April, 2021

**Re: Ukraine Ban on Asbestos**

Dear Mr Razumkov and Mr. Radutskyi,

We are writing in our capacity as the General Secretary of the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), the General Secretary of the Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI), the president of the Ukraine construction trade union federation PROFBUD, respectively the European, global and Ukraine Industry Federations for the building, woodworking, forestry and allied industries and trades sectors.

Our respective organisations have been extremely active over the asbestos issue due to the elevated incidence of asbestos-related diseases contracted by our members. The vast majority of asbestos used has been and remains to be for the production of asbestos-cement building products, which are handled and cut or otherwise treated and removed by construction workers on a regular basis. Many of our members work in the unregulated informal sector in industrializing countries and have no access to masks, protective equipment or health and safety training or medical surveillance. Their occupational exposure to asbestos are routine, high and potentially lethal.

In 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognised the deadly danger faced by construction workers:

“Continued use of asbestos cement in the construction industry is a particular concern because the workforce is large, it is difficult to control exposure, and in-place materials have the potential to deteriorate and pose a risk to those carrying out alterations, maintenance and demolition”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WHO. *Elimination of Asbestos-related Diseases*. 2006.

[https://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/publications/asbestosrelateddiseases.pdf](https://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/asbestosrelateddiseases.pdf)

In their 2006 guidance, the WHO also confirmed the hazard posed by exposure to ALL types of asbestos fibre, including chrysotile fibres:

“Asbestos (actinolite, anthophyllite, chrysotile, crocidolite and tremolite) has been classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as being carcinogenic to humans. Exposure to chrysotile, amosite and anthophyllite asbestos and to mixtures containing crocidolite results in an increased risk of lung cancer. Mesotheliomas have been observed after occupational exposure to crocidolite, amosite, tremolite and chrysotile, as well as among the general populations living in the neighbourhood of asbestos factories and mines and in people living with asbestos workers... No threshold has been identified for the carcinogenic risk of chrysotile... the most efficient way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases is to stop the use of all types of asbestos.”

The EFBWW has taken a large number of measures, working with our social partners and on our own to raise asbestos awareness among workers in European countries via: information sessions, publicity campaigns, publications, conferences and other collaborations. We have worked closely with EU political partners to progress the adoption of legislation banning asbestos use and introducing stricter regulations to minimize exposures to in-place asbestos, whilst plans to introduce mandatory asbestos removal deadlines are considered. Some of the recent initiatives we have taken on the asbestos hazard include: “Asbestos, Still a Killer” Poster (2019), EFBWW Trade Union Guide on Using Asbestos Registries (2018), AB-CLEAN Asbestos Awareness E-Learning Course (2014), Asbestos-related Occupational Diseases in Central and East European Countries (2013). More information on all these projects is available on our website: <https://www.efbww.eu/>.

**The EFBWW, BWI and PROFBUD remain committed to the objective of protecting all workers from deadly substances. We fully support our affiliate and long term sister organization PROFBUD, the Ukrainian Building Workers union, in their address to the Parliament on the final voting for the Draft Law 4142 "On the Public Health Systems" where a significant effort on the chrysotile asbestos ban is made". We express our full solidarity with you and your efforts to ban asbestos in Ukraine as a first step towards eradicating this workplace hazard, which has taken the lives of untold numbers of workers.**

As we approach International Workers’ Memorial Day, we remain committed to the traditional slogan of the day: Remember the dead and fight for the living. It is relevant to point out that the theme for IWMD 2021 is: [Health and Safety is a fundamental workers' right](#). **This right belongs not just to EU workers, but to workers the world over.**

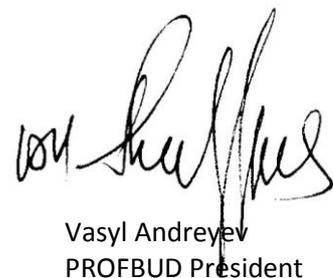
Yours sincerely,



Tom Deleu  
EFBWW General Secretary



Ambet Yuson  
BWI General Secretary



Vasyl Andreyev  
PROFBUD President