

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004016/25
to the Commission**

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(13 October 2025)

Subject: Strengthening EU action to prevent silicosis in the workplace and protect workers

More than 3.2 million people in the EU are exposed to crystalline silica dust at work. In some Member States, silicosis continues to affect workers in sectors such as mining, quarrying and artificial stone processing. Alarming reports confirm an increase in new cases among younger workers, who then have to contend with a chronic and irreversible disease at the start of their working life. In addition to destroying one's health, this disease also disrupts families and communities, putting a heavy emotional and financial burden on national health systems.

In view of the above:

1. What measures is the Commission taking to improve prevention, monitoring and early detection of silicosis across the EU, in cooperation with the Member States?
2. How does it intend to strengthen the occupational health and safety regulations, ensuring more stringent exposure limits for respirable crystalline silica, in line with the latest scientific evidence?
3. What funding and support mechanisms are available in the EU to improve research, medical care, compensation and social protection for workers affected by silicosis?

Submitted: 13.10.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(11 December 2025)

The Carcinogens, Mutagens and Reprotoxic Substances Directive (CMRD) protects workers from exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) that potentially causes silicosis ⁽¹⁾. The CMRD includes a binding occupational exposure limit (BOEL) for RCS. The Commission also improves prevention of silicosis via awareness raising, good practice exchange and guidance through collaboration with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work ⁽²⁾.

The Commission supports the collection of data on nationally recognised occupational diseases, including silicosis, via the voluntary European occupational diseases statistics pilot ⁽³⁾. Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/2337 ⁽⁴⁾, which is regularly updated, encourages countries to improve knowledge and diagnosis of occupational diseases, including silicosis.

The Commission is studying the health and economic impact of a possible revision of the BOEL for RCS under the framework of CMRD. The current work is informed by scientific evidence, such as a European Chemical Agency Opinion, and subject to stakeholder input.

The EU non-communicable diseases initiative ⁽⁵⁾ supports health promotion and prevention of non-communicable diseases, including silicosis. Over EUR 280 million from the EU4Health programme ⁽⁶⁾ were made available to support countries and stakeholders ⁽⁷⁾. Support for research is available through EU funding programmes, including Horizon Europe, though no project on the topic is currently being funded.

While social protection remains a national competence, the Commission provides related funding, guidance and exchange of best practices.

1 Directive 2004/37/EC <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02004L0037-20240408>.

2 Examples available at <https://oshwiki.osha.europa.eu/en/themes/respirable-crystalline-silica>

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/european-occupational-diseases-statistics> (for all Member States except Germany, Greece and Portugal).

4 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2022/2337/oj/eng>.

5 https://health.ec.europa.eu/non-communicable-diseases/healthier-together-eu-non-communicable-diseases-initiative_en.

6 https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en.

7 E.g. the Joint Action on REspiratory Diseases aims to improve lung health across Europe <https://europeanlung.org/jared/>.