

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002164/26
to the Commission
Thomas Pellerin-Carlin (S&D)
(27 May 2026)**

Subject: Harmonisation of asbestos identification technologies in the single market

Asbestos causes cancer and known serious diseases. Despite being banned in the European Union since 2005, it remains prevalent in existing buildings (schools, hospitals and homes) and new matrices are increasingly being tested for it, particularly when it comes to certain products intended for children.

To strengthen worker protection, the Commission has required that electron microscopy be used to identify asbestos, but has left the choice between scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and transmission electron microscopy (TEM) up to Member States.

However, those two techniques do not offer equivalent performance. Only with TEM can the finest fibres be observed and analysed using electron diffraction, which is vital for reliably distinguishing asbestos fibres from interferents, especially at very low concentrations. In other words, when asbestos is in certain forms, it cannot be detected by SEM, even though it is known to be dangerous in those forms.

With a view to harmonising the internal market and providing equivalent protection for workers and the public, does the Commission intend to explicitly recommend, or even mandate, the EU-wide use of TEM to identify asbestos?

Submitted: 27.5.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(2 July 2026)**

According to Article 7(6) of Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work ⁽¹⁾ as recently amended by Directive (EU) 2023/2668 ⁽²⁾, fibre counting shall be carried out by electron microscopy or by any alternative method that provides equivalent or more accurate results.

A detailed description of the analytical methods, including transmission electron microscopy (TEM), can be found in the Guidelines for managing asbestos-related health and safety risks at work recently published by the Commission ⁽³⁾.

It is for the Member States to determine the appropriate methods for achieving the objectives and limit values set out in the directive. Directive 2009/148/EC lays down minimum requirements and Member States may apply or introduce measures ensuring greater protection for workers.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2009/148/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work (OJ L 330, 16.12.2009, pp. 28-36), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02009L0148-20231220&qid=1781091451136>.

⁽²⁾ Directive (EU) 2023/2668 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work (OJ L, 2023/2668, 30.11.2023), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32023L2668>.

⁽³⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6523ba3a-df3b-11f0-8439-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.