

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002288/26
to the Commission
Afroditi Latinopoulou (Pfe)
(3 June 2026)**

Subject: Recognition of malignant neoplasms in firefighters as occupationally related diseases

In 2022, the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified occupational exposure of firefighters in Group 1 ('carcinogenic to humans'). The relevant IARC Monographs Volume 132 extensively documents the association of the firefighting profession with an increased risk of developing many types of cancer. At the same time, several countries have already made specific arrangements to recognise cancers as occupational diseases of firefighters.

Given that firefighters are exposed daily to carcinogens in the performance of their duties:

1. Will the Commission consider updating the European list of occupational diseases to recognise cancers associated with the firefighting profession?
2. Does the Commission intend to propose guidelines or European initiatives to Member States on the prevention, monitoring and compensation of occupational malignancies in firefighters?
3. Does the Commission have data on occupationally related cancers and deaths of firefighters in the EU Member States?

Submitted: 3.6.2026

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

1. The recommendation on the European schedule of occupational diseases ⁽¹⁾ does not focus on specific occupations, but it covers specific diseases caused by specific hazardous substances. Substances of concern to firefighters, such as benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, formaldehyde, asbestos, chromium and heavy metals like lead and mercury, are covered by the recommendation, which was recently updated with further asbestos-related diseases.
2. Under EU legislation ⁽²⁾, employers must assess all safety and health risks that their workers face as a result of their work and take the necessary preventive and protective measures. Member States must ensure that workers receive health surveillance appropriate to the risks they incur at work, including from exposure to carcinogens and other chemicals. Moreover, in 2025, the Commission adopted guidelines for managing asbestos-related health and safety risks at work ⁽³⁾. They include a chapter addressed specifically to firefighters and other emergency services. In addition, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work provides information and tools ⁽⁴⁾, as well as a case study ⁽⁵⁾ on protecting the health of firefighters. Matters related to the recognition of and compensation for occupational diseases fall under the competence of the Member States.
3. Under EU legislation on EU statistics on health and safety at work ⁽⁶⁾, Member States are not obliged to provide data on accidents at work that are subject to confidentiality rules under national legislation, including as regards such accidents suffered by firefighters and in fire service activities ⁽⁷⁾. European occupational diseases statistics (EODS) ⁽⁸⁾ data do not allow for a breakdown of occupational cancer cases reported by occupation for firefighters.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2025/2609/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Including in particular Council Directive 89/391/EEC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1989/391/2008-12-11>, Directive 2009/148/EC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/148/2023-12-20>, Council Directive 98/24/EC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1998/24/2024-04-08>, and Directive 2004/37/EC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2004/37/2024-04-08>.

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

⁽⁴⁾ <https://osha.europa.eu/en>, see, for example, https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/emergency_services.pdf.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Healthy-firefighters.pdf>.

⁽⁶⁾ See, in particular, Commission Regulation (EU) No 349/2011, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2011/349/oj>.

⁽⁷⁾ ISCO-08 occupation code 5411 for firefighters and NACE Rev. 2 class 84.25 for fire service activities.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/european-occupational-diseases-statistics>. It is noted that not all Member States participate in EODS, whilst the recognition and reporting criteria of occupational diseases differ between the Member States, with the result that the data reported by the Member States are not readily comparable with each other.