

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1472/08
by Adamos Adamou (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Asbestos-related diseases

In order to try and prevent asbestos-related hazards, the EU has for some years been following a clear and distinct policy comprising preventive legislation, information and awareness-raising activities, cooperation with stakeholders and a coordinated implementation and enforcement policy with subsequent monitoring. A general ban on the production and marketing of asbestos or asbestos-containing products has been in effect since 2005; the handling of asbestos in any form has been prohibited since April 2006. Yet, its use in demolition, maintenance and removal work is allowed under strictly regulated conditions, and in the industrialised countries 20 000 asbestos-induced lung cancers and 10 000 mesothelioma cases are estimated to occur each year.

Has the Commission been able to identify the exposure threshold below which asbestos does not involve a cancer risk or a risk for any other asbestos-related illness, and if yes what measures are to be taken in reinforcing a lower exposure threshold?

If not, what is the rationale for still allowing the use of asbestos in demolition, maintenance etc., since other substitute products exist and their use can be promoted?

What is the opinion of the Commission with regard to possible EU-wide health-care benefits for those workers presently or previously employed in companies using asbestos in their activities?

What is the opinion of the European Commission with regard to EU-wide provision of adequate, fast and effective compensation, in all Member States, for all victims of asbestos-related diseases in the workplace?