

**Question for written answer E-003746/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Recognising firefighters among the occupational categories at risk of contamination with asbestos and PFAS

Firefighters and everyone else involved in rescue and firefighting operations are at risk of asbestos and PFAS contamination when working in buildings and facilities where these substances – exposure to which can cause serious illnesses – are present.

These rescue workers use special personal protective equipment and, in the case of fires, foaming agents which constitute another potential source of exposure to contamination. However, many national bodies of law do not include them among the categories of workers who can be afflicted by occupational diseases arising from exposure to asbestos and PFAS, which excludes them from social security benefits and the other safeguards covering cases of incapacity.

The 2023 Directive, approved by the European Parliament, requires Member States to implement protective measures against exposure to asbestos by 2025, while trade union representatives – in particular from FNS CISL – have highlighted the need for firefighters to be recognised among the occupational categories at risk of contamination with asbestos and PFAS.

In the light of the above, can the Commission state whether and what initiatives it plans to promote to ensure that firefighters are uniformly recognised, across all the Member States, as being liable to occupational illnesses arising from exposure to asbestos and PFAS, including when using special protective equipment?

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