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European H&S Week 22-28 October 2018 - Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances:

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

The theme for European Health & Safety Week 2018, organised by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), is 'Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances'. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the risks posed by dangerous substances in the workplace and to promote a culture of risk prevention to eliminate and, where that's not possible, effectively manage these risks.

Many workers across Europe are affected by exposure to dangerous substances. In recent decades some substances, such as asbestos, have been banned, restricted or subjected to strict regulatory control. However, dangerous substances continue to be a major safety and health issue in some workplaces.

For the purposes of this campaign, a dangerous substance is any substance in gas, liquid or solid form, including aerosols, fumes and vapours, that can pose a risk to workers' health or safety. This includes manufactured chemicals, process-generated substances such as diesel exhaust or silica dust, and naturally occurring substances used in work processes such as crude oil or flour dust

Exposure to dangerous substances is much more common in Europe's workplaces than most people imagine. Dangerous substances at work can cause a wide range of health problems and diseases, as well as posing safety risks. The [2018-19 campaign](#) aims to raise awareness of the risks posed by dangerous substances in the workplace and to promote a culture of risk prevention.

Campaign objectives

- To **raise awareness of the importance of preventing risks from dangerous substances**, helping to dispel common misunderstandings.
- To **promote risk assessment** by providing information on practical tools and creating opportunities to share good practices, focusing specifically on:
 - eliminating or substituting dangerous substances in the workplace
 - the hierarchy of prevention measures (i.e. following the hierarchy outlined in legislation so that the most effective type of measure is always selected).

- To **heighten awareness of risks linked to exposures to carcinogens at work** by supporting the exchange of good practices; EU-OSHA is a signatory to the covenant committing to the [EU Carcinogens Roadmap](#).
- To **target groups of workers with specific needs and higher levels of risks** by providing tailored information as well as examples of good practices. The risks might be higher because these workers are inexperienced, uninformed or physically more vulnerable, or because they frequently change jobs, or work in sectors where awareness of the issue is low, or because of a higher or different physiological sensitivity (e.g. in young apprentices, or differences between men and women).
- To **increase knowledge of the legislative framework** that is already in place to protect workers, as well as highlighting policy developments.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer