Submission by Laurie Kazan-Allen to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, European Parliament

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The EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights asserts the right to life, the right to the integrity of the person as well as workers’ rights to information. The European Convention on Human Rights clearly states that “everyone’s right to life shall be protected by the law.”
It is not unreasonable to suggest that in Western Europe alone, more than 500,000 people will die from asbestos-caused diseases in the current 35 year period (1995-2029). This equates to the elimination of the entire populations of Sheffield, Grenoble, Nuremburg or Bologna.
UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF EUROPE’S ASBESTOS TRAGEDY
EU asbestos victims have the right to receive appropriate medical treatment, practical support and recompense; that they are not receiving what they are due is inequitable and contrary to the fundamental principles for which the EU stands.
Recommendation

EU legislation should be enacted which mandates the human rights of asbestos victims regardless of the source of their exposure, their employment status or the type of asbestos-related illness.
MISSING ELEMENTS OF EU ASBESTOS FRAMEWORK
Recommendation

The Committee of Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament should establish an Asbestos Sub-Committee to act as a conduit between asbestos victims and their elected representatives in Brussels. The Asbestos Sub-Committee would oversee the setting up of a body to coordinate an EU Asbestos Action Plan; as part of this process, a European Centre for Asbestos-related Disease Research (ECARD) would be established.
THE ROLE OF VICTIMS’ GROUPS
Recommendation

EU policymakers recognize the role of asbestos victims’ groups, allocate funding for their work and include them as stakeholders in discussions regarding the EU’s future asbestos policy.
ELIMINATING ASBESTOS-RELATED DISEASES
Recommendation

The Asbestos Sub-Committee should be tasked with producing a cohesive EU strategy for eliminating asbestos-related diseases; a 2023 deadline for Europe’s asbestos decontamination is proposed.