

# Trade union cooperation against work-related cancers

Tony Musu, European Trade Union Institute  
Workers and creativity conference  
Brussels, 27 June 2017

# Overview

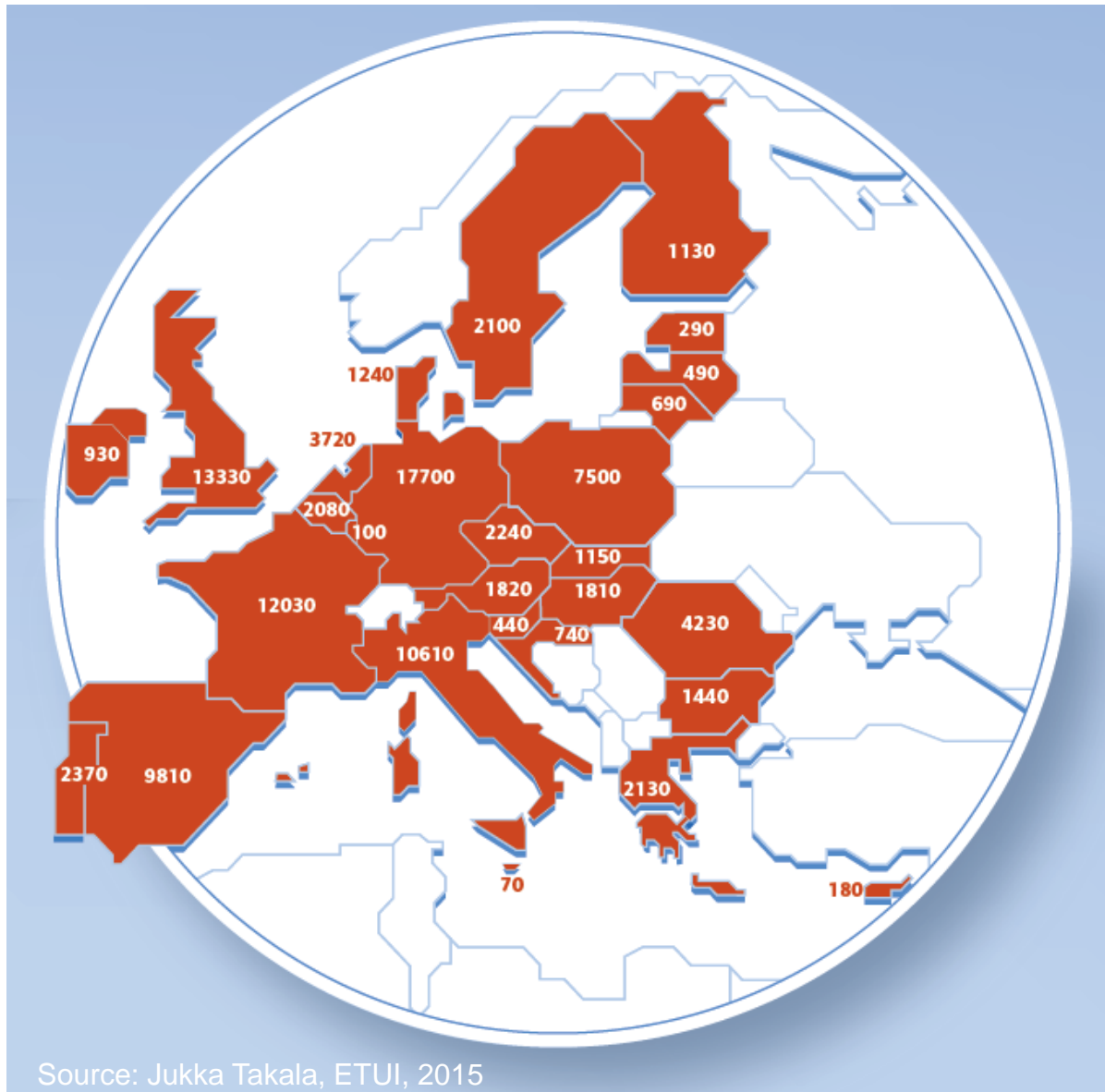
- background info on occupational cancers
- trade union network on chemicals
- the ETUC campaign: stop cancer at work
- longer term perspectives

## Background information on occupational cancers in the EU

- 1 280 000 cancer deaths estimated in the EU-28 in 2012
- ETUI estimates that at least 8% of cancer deaths are work-related
- cancer is now the main cause of “death by working conditions” in Europe (~ 102 500 deaths/year)
- generalized under-reporting, under-recognition and battle for compensation in all EU countries
- manual workers are more exposed to carcinogens than white-collar workers (important social inequalities of health)
- multiple exposures is the general situation
- occupational cancers are preventable

# Distribution of occupational cancer deaths/year in the EU-28

Cancer is the biggest killer at work in the EU-28

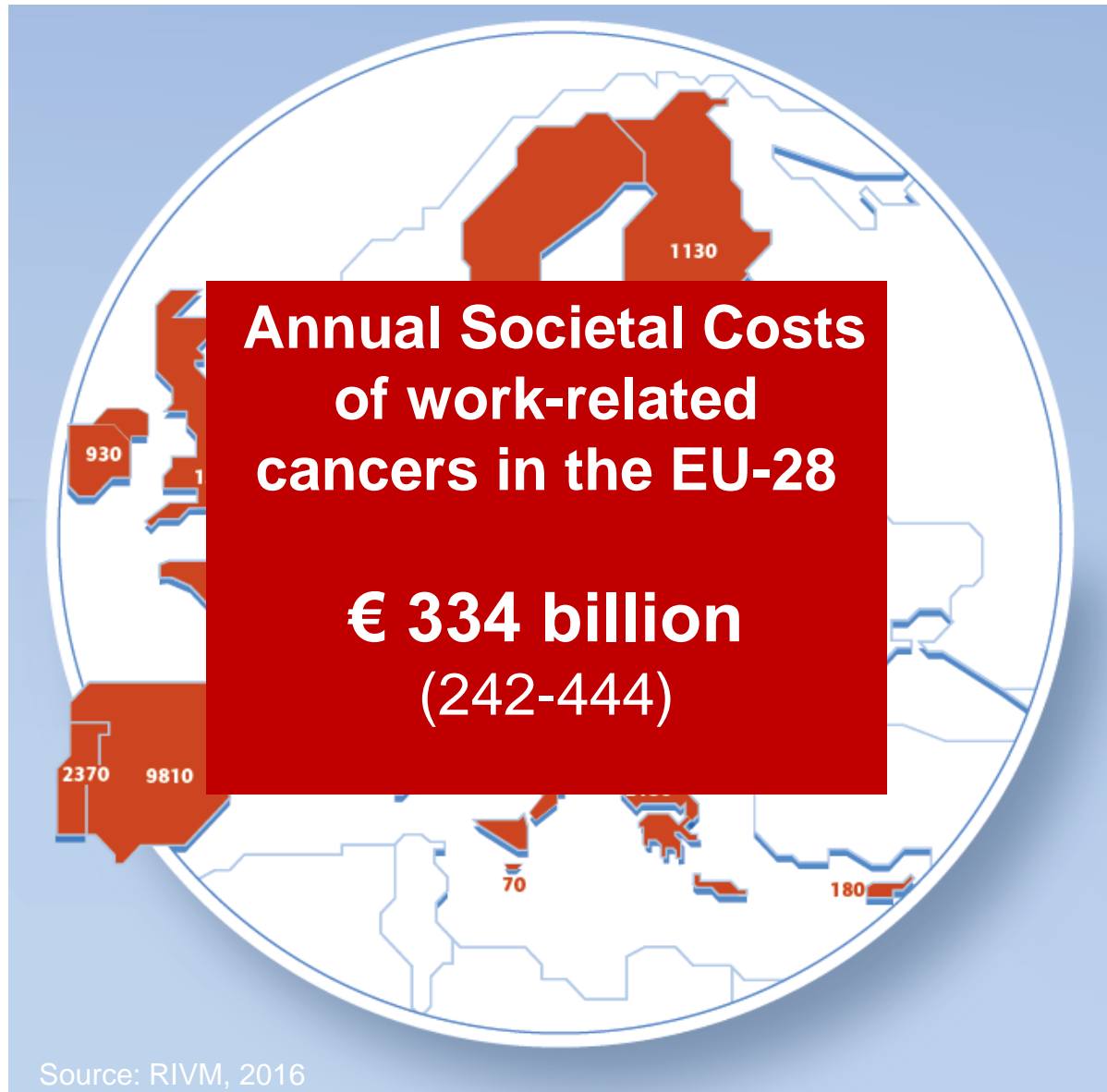


102 500 deaths/year due to work-related cancers

Source: Jukka Takala, ETUI, 2015

**etui.**

# Negative impact on workers, employers and social-security



# ETUI network on chemicals

- ~ 40 national trade union experts across the EU
- active at national level in OSH issues
- many are WIG members of the Advisory Cttee on Health & Safety at work in Luxembourg
- many are members of the ETUC OSH Cttee
- annual seminar

## Objectives ?

- exchange information
- coordinate trade union activities
- training



# Campaña Cáncer Cero en el Trabajo

Zero Occupational Cancer Campaign

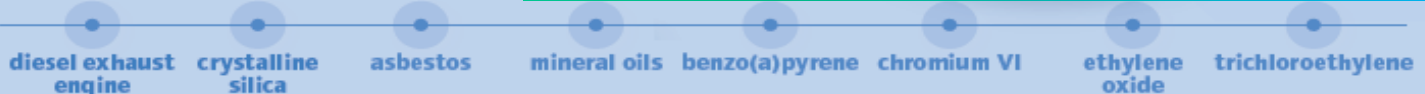
## Stop cancer at work

**53%** of all work-related deaths are caused by occupational cancer.



**THESE DEATHS ARE PREVENTABLE**

Some of the main carcinogens causing work cancers



**50** carcinogens account for more than **80%** of all exposure at work.

**5** The current number of binding occupational exposure limit values (OELs) adopted at EU level.



OELs are minimum levels of protection against hazardous substances in the workplace.

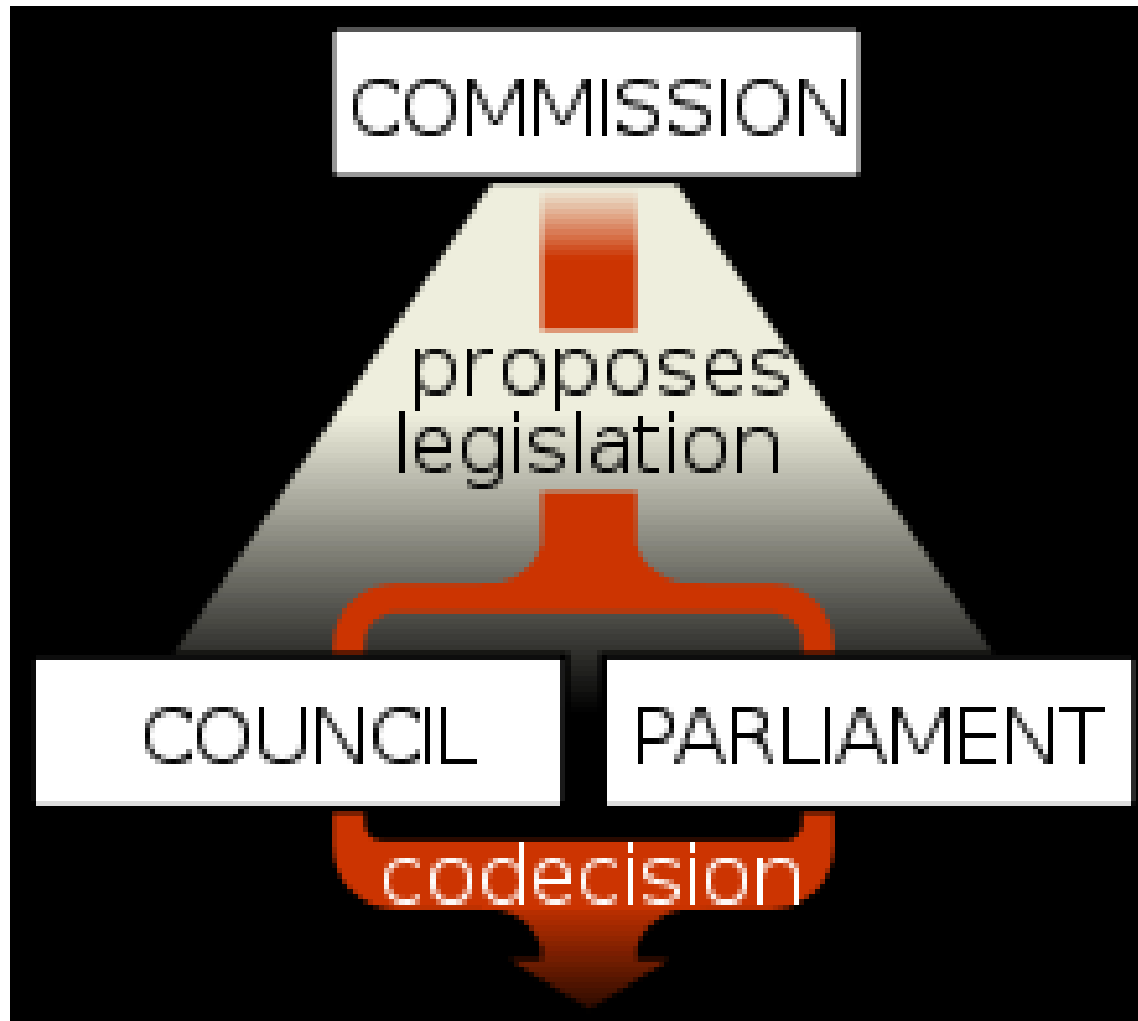
There are large differences in the level of protection of workers across the EU. Every country has its own number of OELs, and often different levels for the same substance.

Binding OELs are one of the essential tools for minimizing the exposure levels.

The ETUC calls on the EU to urgently update the Carcinogens and mutagens directive and adopt binding OELs for at least 50 priority carcinogens



# The Carcinogens Directive is currently under revision



# Coordination activities at national level in the NL

Enkele van de belangrijkste carcinogenen op het werk

dieseluitlaat-gassen

kristallijn silica

asbest

minerale oliën

benzo(a)pyreen

chrom VI

ethyleen-oxide

trichloorethyleen

**50** carcinogenen veroorzaken meer dan 80% van alle blootstelling op het werk.

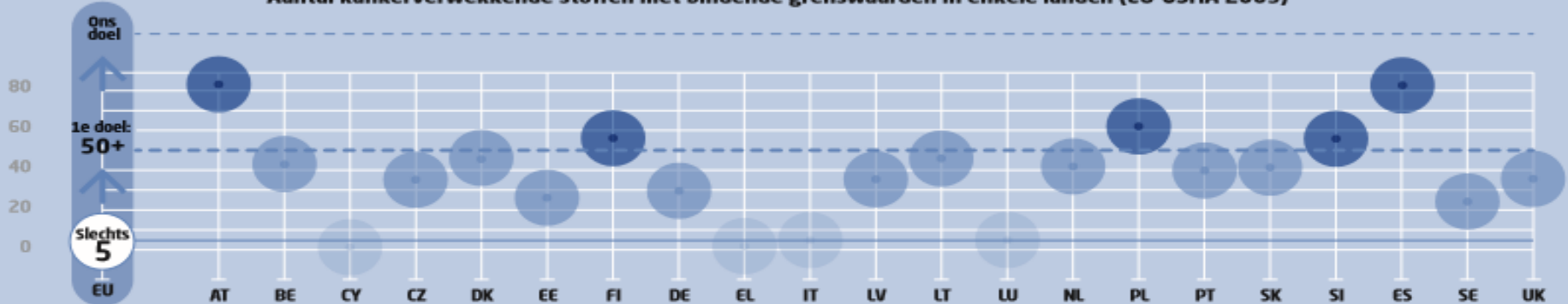
**5** is het huidige aantal bindende grenswaarden voor beroepsmatige blootstelling (OEL) op Europees niveau.



OEL's (*occupational exposure limits*) zijn minimale beschermingsniveaus tegen gevaarlijke stoffen op het werk.

Er zijn binnen de Europese Unie grote verschillen in beschermingsniveau van werknemers. Ieder land hanteert zijn eigen OEL-aantal en vaak ook nog verschillende niveaus voor dezelfde stof.

Aantal kankerverwekkende stoffen met bindende grenswaarden in enkele landen (EU-OSHA 2009)



Bindende OEL's zijn een essentieel instrument om blootstelling te beperken

De ETUC verzoekt de EU met klem de richtlijn voor carcinogene of mutagene stoffen te actualiseren en voor minstens 50 meest kankerverwekkende stoffen bindende OEL's op te stellen.



## Longer term perspectives & needs identified by the network

- a public policy against work-related cancers
  - Promoting substitution (public support & speed up identification of carcinogens)
  - Collecting systematic data on exposure
  - Collecting reliable data on cancer and occupations
  - Enforcement
- a consistent regulatory framework for Substances toxic for reproduction & Endocrine Disruptor Chemicals
- pay more attention to gender
- more training of workers & employers for prevention

Thank you for your attention !

More information:

1) Eliminating occupational cancer in Europe and globally

<http://www.etui.org/en/Publications2/Working-Papers/Eliminating-occupational-cancer-in-Europe-and-globally>

2) Cancer risks in the workplace, better regulation, stronger protection

<http://www.etui.org/fr/Publications2/Working-Papers/Cancer-risks-in-the-workplace-better-regulation-stronger-protection>

3) Carcinogens that should be subject to binding limits on workers exposure

<http://www.etui.org/fr/Publications2/Rapports/Carcinogens-that-should-be-subject-to-binding-limits-on-workers-exposure>