

EESC and Safer by Design

27th November 2013

Brussels: Hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) the European Minerals Foundation Forum together with a whole range of extractive industry associations held an event on “Working together for accident prevention”.

Mrs Christa Schweng, EESC, welcomed the participants to this fruitful dialogue and highlighted the advisory function of the EESC to the other European institutions.

Mr Armindo Silva, Director, Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue, gave the opening speech and reminded the participants of the fact that the extractive industry in Europe like agriculture is one of the strategic industries in Europe. He recalled that there were many thousand sites across Europe supplying vital resources to the downstream industry and the overall economy and that the extractive sector provides 300,000 jobs across the Union. He recalled that employment and safety need to go hand in hand and that he welcomed this particular initiative of a two industrial sectors to create new safety standards.

Moderated by Mr Simon van der Byl (UK Mineral Products Association) a forum consisting of Mr Ian Fraser (Policy Officer - Team Leader for the Machinery sector - Policy Officer of Machinery Directive, DG Enterprise & Industry), Mr Reinhold Hartdegen (Chair of the CEN TC 151 'Construction equipment and building material machines - Safety'), Mr Werner Sterk (Head of the Safety Technology Department KAN Commission for Occupational Safety and Health and Standardization), Mr Simon Hunter, Chairman of the Euromines Health and Safety Committee and member of the Standing Working Party Extractive Industry (SWPEI), and Mr Ralf Wezel (Secretary General, Committee for European Construction Equipment (CECE)) the way forward in increasing the safety at the work place in the extractive industry across Europe.

Policy issues such as eliminating illegal extraction and imports of sub-standard machinery, as well as permitting standards and technical machinery standards were being discussed.

The importance of standardisation was highlighted by several participants, but in the context of the EU's policy for innovation and reindustrialisation it was also highlighted that standardisation can assist to raise safety standards, but that EU competitiveness is not achieved by cementing existing technology, but developing new ones.

Both extractive industry and machinery producers agreed on closer cooperation in achieving higher, but cost-effective technical solutions and increased safety standards and when it comes to the interface between man and machine. Both sectors felt that in the context of the EU's Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials and the Horizon 2020 opportunities will arise to develop cooperation programmes such as the UK “Safer by Design”

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Euromines is the European representation of the extractive industry. The organisation represents 42 different metals and minerals being mined in Europe and abroad and companies employing 350000 people in Europe. Its membership also includes many technology providers for the extractive industry.

model and to enlarge it to European scale.

Euromines has signed up as a partner for such a project with a number of national experts as one of its commitments under the EIP on Raw Materials.

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Euromines is the recognised representative of the European metals and minerals mining industry. The association's main objective is to promote the industry and to maintain its relations with European institutions at all levels. Euromines provides services to its members with regard to EU policy and serves as a network for cooperation and for the exchange of information throughout the sector within Europe. The association also fosters contacts with the mining community throughout the world. Euromines represents large and small companies and subsidiaries in Europe and in other parts of the world which provide jobs to more than 350,000 people. Through the activities and operations of these members, more than 42 different metals and minerals are produced. For some metals and minerals, Europe is the world's leading producer.