



Report from the NEPSI EN ACTION Seminar Paris, France 14 February 2023

NEPSI in ACTION first seminar took place in Paris, France on 14 February 2023. Around 80 people (social partners from signatory sectors and representatives of French authorities/institutions) attended the seminar to learn about the new NEPSI tools and exchange on the interaction of good practices and French legislation.



The seminar started with the welcoming address of the NEPSI Council Chairs, Sylvain Lefebvre and Florence Lumen, Senior policy advisor of IndustriALL Europe, Sophie Grenade, and the Secretary General of the Industrial Minerals France (MIF), Sandra Rimey.

Valérie Drezet-Humez, the French representative of the European Commission opened the seminar by noting that 5 million workers in Europe are potentially exposed to crystalline silica. She stressed that it is crucial to accompany the implementation of legislation with practical tools like NEPSI which are fit for the reality in workplaces. She recalled the importance of the subject of protection of the health and safety of workers in the general political orientations of the European Commission, such as the "Green Deal" and industrial policy. The year 2023 is the year of European Skills Agenda, and it will be necessary to rely on the social partners on this subject.



Anne Audic, Deputy director on Occupational Health and Safety at General Directorate of Labor (DGT) informed the audience that the social dialogue agreement and the safety of workers is regularly on their agenda. The DGT is responsible for setting the occupational limit values for hazardous chemical agents. Sectoral good practice initiatives like the NEPSI ones to accompany the implementation of limit values are very useful. The DGT carried out a specific action for the attention of SMEs in 2022. A fourth plan has been put in place with the social partners and the institutions for health at work, and it will be launched at regional level.



The new NEPSI tools were presented to the participants by the NEPSI Council chairs. The audience highly appreciated the work conducted and acknowledged their value to prevent dust exposure and improve the workplace in terms of health and safety.



Franck Meunier, Director of Industrial Risk Management at Imerys, shared their example of managing the exposure to crystalline silica. The company purchased proper equipment to do further measurements and complement the specific legislation in France. They created a EHS Audit Protocol to ensure the implementation of legislation together with the auditing. An e-learning training module based on NEPSI tools was also developed.

The participants asked whether there are any sectors which are not covered by NEPSI. The biggest sector which NEPSI misses is the Construction (BTP: bâtiment et travaux publics). In the construction sector there are around 3 million workers in the EU who are exposed to crystalline silica and one can observe that it is in this sector of activity made up of small mobile workplaces that compliance with OELs is the most difficult. However, NEPSI is in constant dialogue with the sector where they exchange their practices. The construction sector has also their good practices like NEPSI. It seems that the constrain for them not joining NEPSI is the NEPSI KPIs reporting.

Mapping of French situation concerning crystalline silica and NEPSI

The results of the questionnaire identify the need for more French interprofessional meetings, and the need to create a network of SMEs on the subject of NEPSI/RCS. The current focus of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) of companies could be profitable to enhance the health protection of employees, in addition to existing legislative tools. Indeed, CSR includes improvement of working conditions.



Roundtable 1: National legislation and points of convergence with NEPSI good practices



In France there are around 350.000 workers exposed to crystalline silica. 20.000-30.000 of them are exposed at levels above the OEL. 2/3 of this figure is coming from the construction sector.

The DGT and ANSES mentioned that NEPSI could be a preferential contact point to obtain data from the field (including exposure data). Partnership with the INRS, CARSAT, and work inspectors should be used.

Employee representative underlines the phenomenon of trivialization of the risk. If not regularly informed and trained, the workers can over time forget the risks associated with exposure to dust and crystalline silica. He also points out that the precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE) are not always adapted to reality and constraints of the work (heat, fatigue, pace). Indeed, Christian Ambrosino from Verallia, mentioned that the company provides a training to the workers, however each worker may handle it differently later. A first initial training is not enough, but must be constant and must adapt to the needs of the workers, in the content and in the form. He underlined the existence of what he calls “passive/indirect exposure to crystalline silica”, i.e. the one that has not been clearly identified. There is a need to reinforce the training and insist on wearing Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE). A continuous engagement and communication are needed between the workers and employers to ensure a safe environment and application of good practices.

Olivier Mailloux, member of the Health and Safety committee of the UNPG (French National Union of Aggregate Producers) presented the recently updated guide "Prevention of risks related to dust emissions in quarries".

This methodological guide, which is part of a global approach to the prevention of dust emissions in quarries, recalls the regulations, the risks, prevention and risk assessment. It is



completed by methodological and technical sheets on good practices. It is completely complementary to the NEPSI guide to which it refers.

Roundtable 2: The issues and needs of the SMEs concerning the prevention of dust and the training of young workers



Bruno Courtois, INRS, mentioned that the awareness of the legislation differs from one company to another. For educating the workers, a visual approach is captivating and simpler for understanding when talking about dust exposure, that's where he sees the value of real-time measurement devices coupled with a camera. In addition, he stressed that the NEPSI agreement provides very useful prevention tools and aims to homogenize practices at European level. INRS talks about NEPSI and its good practices on their website:

[NEPSI in INRS](#)

Bruno Courtois highlighted that companies should not focus on exposure measurements, but rather do prevention upstream to avoid exposure.

Christine Boust of CARSAT shows interesting illustrations of situations in companies where they intervened and took measurements. She states that it is necessary to make progress in dust/RCS prevention and above all not to underestimate workers' exposure at the workplaces. She mentions that there are public funding to support companies with fewer than 50 employees with aid up to 50% (between 30 and 70%).

Chantal Hubert, Fulchiron, noted that companies pay the mistakes of the past in terms of workplace installations, behavioral habits etc. She recalls that it is not enough to raise the awareness of workers, but also of the management who are not always informed of the risks and do not advocate for sufficient investments to avoid or mitigate the risks of exposure. Collective protection should be the priority, before individual protection, but this sometimes requires reviewing the entire production unit. She shared her commitment to work on



collective protection and awareness raising thanks to the NEPSI tools and trainings and to respect social dialogue.

E-learning training modules may not be appropriate in all situations. It is sometimes better to organize collective training sessions. Mrs. Hubert is of the opinion that training should be addressed at all workers, regardless of their age. She finally explained that the COVID pandemic helped for the acceptance of wearing the dust masks.

The participants debated whether the NEPSI good practices should be mandatory. It was agreed that good practices are recommended voluntary tools to complement the legislation and reinforce the health and safety conditions of a workplace.

All participants shared the same view on how important is to associate the workers and their representatives to the discussion on RCS/dust prevention.

Conclusions of the conference:

Social dialogue between workers' and employers' representatives is a core element. The NEPSI Agreement is recognized as a necessary instrument to support the effective implementation of legislation and limit values and NEPSI signatories wanted to discuss the possibility of obtaining this recognition at national level.

We benefited today from the presence and participation of the representation of the European Commission in France, the Directorate-General for Labour, and prevention institutes such as INRS and CARSAT. The discussions were very interesting. It emerged that sectors agreements such as NEPSI can indeed accompany and complement legislation and follow its evolution. Such initiatives could be introduced at national and/or local level. The data collected by the signatories is a valuable and useful resource.

NEPSI is a collective work bringing together Employers and Trade Union and benefits from the strong support of the European Commission. There is a true co-operation with the European Commission which has enabled the creation of new NEPSI tools and now their dissemination. The NEPSI in ACTION team is organizing the national seminars to see how the NEPSI tools are perceived and used, and are working hard to find ways to attract the younger generation to this industry.

With more than 80 participants from diverse organisations, this first seminar of the NEPSI in ACTION project was a success. The social partners of NEPSI, who were present in large numbers, were keen to highlight their long and joint work and this was successfully done on 14 February in Paris.



Audience in NEPSI in ACTION seminar



NEPSI team for the French seminar



Séminaire NEPSI EN ACTION
Le dialogue social européen s'invite en France !
Venez échanger sur la protection de la
santé des travailleurs
le 14 février 2023

Société Géologique de France

77 rue Claude Bernard, 75005 Paris

Avec le soutien financier de la Commission Européenne

09h00	Café d'accueil
09h30	Mots de bienvenue des Présidents de NEPSI, Sylvain Lefebvre and Florence Lumen Mots de bienvenue d'industriAll Europe, Sophie Grenade Mots de bienvenue des employeurs français, Sandra Rimey, Secrétaire Général de Minéraux Industriels France (MIF) L'Accord NEPSI (vidéo)
09h45	Introduction par Madame Valérie Drezet-Humez Cheffe de Représentation en France de la Commission européenne
09h55	Introduction par Madame Anne Audic, Direction Générale du Travail (DGT), adjointe à la sous-directrice des conditions de travail, de la santé et de la sécurité au travail
10h05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectifs du projet NEPSI EN ACTION • Les outils NEPSI : Guide des bonnes pratiques, Protocole de mesure, Guidances pour les petites et moyennes entreprises, Outils de formation pour les jeunes travailleurs • Expérience d'une entreprise, Franck Meunier, Directeur Gestion des Risques Industriels (Imerys)
11h15	Pause café
11h30	Cartographie de la situation en France concernant la silice cristalline et NEPSI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Présentation des résultats du questionnaire • Interaction avec la salle
11h45	Table ronde: la législation nationale et les points de convergence avec les bonnes pratiques de NEPSI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jérémy De Saint-Jores, Chef du pôle risques chimiques et agents biologiques, Direction Générale du Travail (DGT) • Henri Bastos, Directeur Scientifique Santé au Travail, ANSES¹ • Olivier Mailloux, Responsable HSS, EUROVIA et Commission santé-sécurité Union nationale des producteurs de granulats (UNPG) • Christian Ambrosino, Verallia

¹ L'Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du Travail



13h00	Déjeuner
14h00	<p>Table ronde : les difficultés et les besoins des petites et moyennes entreprises en ce qui concerne la prévention des poussières et la formation des jeunes travailleurs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Christine Boust, Responsable du laboratoire inter régional de chimie, CARSAT²• Bruno Courtois, prévention des risques chimiques, INRS³• Chantal Hubert, Directrice Qualité, Sécurité, RSE, Fulchiron• Jean-Louis Vaxelaire, Graniterie PetitJean SA
15h30	Conclusions du Séminaire par les Présidents de NEPSI

² Caisses d'assurance retraite et de la santé au travail

³ Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité



Liste des signataires de NEPSI :

- IndustriAll Europe – *European Trade Union (Syndicat européen)*
AStA Worldwide – *Association of engineered stones manufacturers (pierres artificielles)*
BIBM – *International Bureau for Precast Concrete (béton préfabriqué)*
CAEF – *European Foundry Association (fonderie)*
CEEMET – *European Tech and Industry Employers (métaux et industries technologiques)*
CEMBUREAU – *European Cement Association (ciment)*
Cerame-Unie – *European Ceramic Industry Association (céramique)*
EMO – *European Mortar Organization (mortier)*
ERMCO – *European Ready-Mixed Concrete Organisation (béton prêt à l'emploi)*
EURIMA – *European Insulation Manufacturers Association (laine minérale)*
EUROGYPSUM – *European Association of Plaster and Plaster Product Manufacturers (plâtre)*
EUROMINES – *European Association of Mining Industries (mines)*
EUROROC – *European Federation of Natural Stone Industries (pierre naturelle)*
EXCA – *European Expanded Clay Association (argile expansée)*
ECSPA – *European Calcium Silicate Producers Association (silicate de calcium)*
FEVE – *European Container Glass Federation (verre d'emballage)*
GlassFibreEurope – *European Glass Fibre Producers Association (fibre de verre)*
Glass for Europe – *Trade association for Europe's flat glass sector (verre plat)*
IMA-Europe – *European Industrial Minerals Association (minéraux industriels)*
UEPG – *European Aggregates Association (granulats)*