Nepsi Today

Delivering results through social dialogue

For twenty years, employers and trade unions have worked together through NEPSI to reduce exposure to respirable crystalline silica, prevent occupational diseases and protect workers' health across Europe. NEPSI shows how Europe can make a tangible difference at national level, by turning shared European commitments into stronger prevention measures, better workplace practices and concrete improvements in workers' health protection. As new challenges emerge, the commitment to prevention, worker protection and social dialogue continues.

The Signatories represent:

9,170
industrial sites across the EU

375,800
employees

42%
of all employees are at risk of exposure to RCS and are followed by health surveillance for silicosis when required

96%
of exposed employees are covered by a specific risk assessment

87%
of exposed employees are covered by specific exposure monitoring

Celebrating 20 years

2006 - 2026 Milestones

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A landmark Social Dialogue Agreement

On 25 April 2006, European employers and trade unions signed the "Agreement on workers' health protection through the good handling and use of crystalline silica and products containing it" in the presence of European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Vladimír Špidla.

Bringing together 14 industrial sectors and their workers' representatives, NEPSI became the first multi-sectoral European agreement. It is dedicated to reducing occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica and protecting workers' health.

Published in the Official Journal of the European Union and translated into 20 languages, the agreement established a unique framework based on social dialogue, good practices, monitoring and continuous improvement. Qualified as innovative, the SDA is the first multi-sectorial agreement, the first published in the Official Journal and the first supported by a structured reporting process.

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From commitment to action, first NEPSI reporting

Two years after the signature of the Agreement, the first NEPSI reporting cycle marked an important milestone in translating commitment into action and monitoring progress and improving worker protection.

4707
sites provided complete data.

428,698
Reported workers

Including

173,239 (40.4%)
workers potentially exposed to respirable crystalline silica.

The reporting exercise provided valuable information on workplace exposure and prevention measures, supporting continuous improvement across sectors. Among workers potentially exposed to RCS:

88% were covered by a specific risk assessment

62% were covered by exposure monitoring

This reporting process became a key element of NEPSI's continuous improvement approach, helping employers and trade unions identify priorities and strengthen prevention efforts.

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Celebrating 10 years of social dialogue in action

Ten years after the signature of the Agreement, NEPSI had grown to 18 signatories, bringing together employers and trade unions committed to protecting workers' health through social dialogue, prevention and continuous improvement.

The anniversary was celebrated at a dedicated conference attended by European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen. In her address, she highlighted the importance of NEPSI as a successful example of European social dialogue:

"The NEPSI Agreement has been a true testament of EU-level social dialogue in action. Setting limit values through EU legislation is instrumental for protection of workers' health. But it is the quality of implementation and enforcement on the ground, on each factory floor, in each mine, on each construction site, that will determine whether lives are saved. That is where we see the true value of the bottom-up approach, which has driven the success of NEPSI."

The Commissioner's statement recognised the unique contribution of NEPSI in translating commitments into practical action in workplaces across Europe, demonstrating how social dialogue can help deliver tangible improvements in workers' health and safety.

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Recognition in European Legislation

In 2018, works involving exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust generated by a work process were included in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (2017/2398). A Binding Occupational Exposure Limit Value at 0.1 mg/m^3 was established.

The Directive also recognised the important role that social partner initiatives can play in supporting effective implementation of occupational health and safety legislation. In Recital 19, the European legislator explicitly acknowledged the value of NEPSI:

"Guides and examples of good practice such as the Social Dialogue 'Agreement on Workers' Health Protection Through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products Containing it' (NEPSI) are valuable and necessary instruments to complement regulatory measures and in particular to support the effective implementation of limit values, and should therefore be given serious consideration."

This recognition confirmed NEPSI's role as a practical and effective complement to legislation, demonstrating how social dialogue, good practices and workplace implementation can support the prevention of occupational diseases and the protection of workers' health.

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New tools for prevention

With the support of the European Commission, NEPSI launched a new generation of practical tools to help employers, workers and their representatives prevent exposure to respirable crystalline silica. The NEPSI Good Practices Guide was fully updated providing 70 task guidance sheets covering a wide range of workplace situations and helping companies implement effective control measures: guide.nepsi.eu/.

Additional tools were developed to support prevention across all sectors and company sizes, including:

- **A dedicated toolkit for for micro, small and medium companies (toolkit.nepsi.eu)**
- **training materials for workers and the creation of an e-learning platform NEPSI E-Learning (training.nepsi.eu),**
- **a standardised methodology to measure exposure to respirable crystalline silica (nepsi.eu/en/implementation/measurement).**

These resources strengthened NEPSI's mission of translating knowledge into action and supporting the effective implementation of good practices in workplaces across Europe.

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NEPSI in action

To bring prevention closer to workplaces, NEPSI organised a series of national seminars across Europe, including in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden.

The seminars promoted NEPSI tools and good practices, bringing together employers, trade unions, prevention experts and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and discuss practical solutions for reducing exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

With an average of 60 participants per event, the seminars fostered dialogue on the implementation of prevention measures and the interaction between national regulations and workplace practices.

These activities helped strengthen awareness, support implementation on the ground and promote a culture of prevention across sectors and countries.

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Expanding outreach and training through NEPSI Propagation

Building on earlier achievements, NEPSI continued to expand its prevention and awareness-raising activities across Europe.

New national seminars and training initiatives will provide opportunities for employers, trade unions and health and safety professionals to exchange experiences and share good practices. Additional e-learning resources will be developed to support worker protection and continuous improvement in workplaces.

A new platform will also be created to showcase national initiatives and facilitate the sharing of practical solutions across sectors and countries.

Through these activities, NEPSI aims to strengthen its network and further promote social dialogue as a driver of workplace health and safety.

2006 - 2026

What is Nepsi?

The European Network on Silica (NEPSI) was established in 2006 through a unique agreement between European employers and trade unions.

Through social dialogue, the signatories work together to reduce occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS), promote good practices and continuously improve workers' health protection.

Why Nepsi Matters

Exposure to respirable crystalline silica remains a major occupational health risk in many industries.

For 20 years, employers and trade unions have worked together through NEPSI to reduce exposure, prevent occupational diseases and protect workers' health.

Behind every prevention measure is a simple objective: ensuring that workers return home healthy at the end of every working day.

Celebrating 20 years 2006-2026 nepSi$_2$ Crystalline Silica / Silice cristalline

Signatories

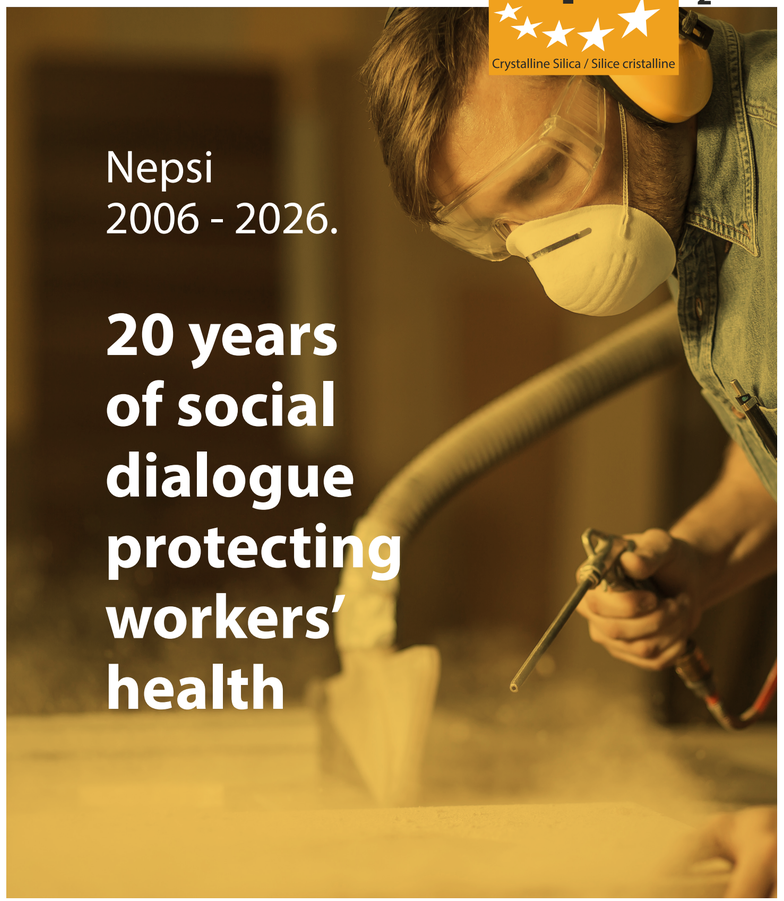
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