



ETUC  
Attn. Per Hilmeresson  
Boulevard Roi Albert II, 5  
B-1210 Brussels  
Belgium

Datum  
31 augustus 2020  
  
Ons kenmerk  
20-087/KJ/WvV/hc  
  
Betreft / Onderwerp  
Diesel Emission

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Bijlage(n)  
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Dear Per Hilmeresson,

The FNV would like to bring the matter of Diesel Emission to your attention and ask for your support in saving lives of many thousands of workers.

As of 1 July, the Netherlands has the lowest binding limit value for Diesel emission in Europe and thus a strict standard for diesel emissions at the workplace, 10 micrograms / m<sup>3</sup>. Diesel emission is a carcinogen and is still common in all Member States of Europe; from garages to construction sites and road and ship transport. In Europe, there has been a long struggle to recognize diesel emissions as carcinogenic. ETUC has made an important contribution to this. For this, we thank the ETUC. Of course, unions and experts had known for a long time that diesel emissions caused cancer, but politicians in Europe ignored the subject of carcinogens at work for many years.

This changed in 2019, and Europe opted for Diesel a legal limit of 50 micrograms per cubic meter in January 2019. Politicians cheered, but experts were amazed; you will not exceed 50 micrograms in the most polluted workplaces where diesel is carried out; this limit value therefore has no real meaning when the health and protection of workers is at stake. The Dutch Health Council recommends 1 microgram / m<sup>3</sup>. Only then, the chance of a disease such as cancer is very small and therefore acceptable.

And although this new Dutch limit value is in fact still 10 times too high, by establishing this value, we are on the right track. The decision to establish the current limit value, was made by the social partners; this means that also the Dutch employers organisations support this limit value.

We think the lowest limit value for diesel emissions in Europe is a good starting point for further actions in Europa. We would therefore appreciate it if the ETUC calls on other trade unions in Europe's Member States to fight for the same standard as in the Netherlands. If more countries adopt this value, the European Commission will have to adjust the far too high European standard. Europe must

get rid of its "diesel addiction". The energy transition is high on the agenda of the European Commission, and the implementation of this transition can put an end to this addiction. With this low limit value, the use of diesel is further discouraged in the Netherlands. By setting sharp binding exposure limits we show that carcinogenic substances are no longer needed in many workplaces and are no longer acceptable especially in the context of the energy transition.

We believe that what is possible in the Netherlands is also possible in the vast majority of other European Member States. The Netherlands also has a wide spread use of diesel; Schiphol airport and Seaport Rotterdam are examples where there is a relatively high exposure for those who work in these regions. So here, in our Member State there is also still a lot of work to be done. We therefore hope that you will inform all ETUC affiliated parties about the Dutch limit value and welcome them to work towards lower diesel emissions exposure for workers in their Member State. Such an action can save many workers' lives.

We also hope that the ETUC can bring this subject into the discussion during the important German EU conference, 'STOP cancer at Work', to be held in November this year, as well as bringing the matter under the attention of Mr Nicolas Schmit, Europe's Commissioner on health and safety at work.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kitty Jong', with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Kitty Jong  
Vice President FNV