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Friday, June 12, 2015, 08:55

Employees exposed to asbestos to be moved by first months of next year - European Commission



All 1,700 staff, including 50 Maltese nationals, directly exposed to asbestos at the Jean Monnet Building in Luxembourg are being moved to an alternative temporary building in Luxembourg by the first months of 2016.

This was said by European Commission vice-president Kristalina Georgieva in reply to repeated questions by former prime minister Alfred Sant, now a member of the European Parliament.

Reacting to Ms Georgieva's reply, Dr Sant said that it was hardly believable that the European Commission should have taken so long to remedy an unacceptable situation in which the health of hundreds of employees was being put at risk.

"The Commission is supposed to set the standards for others but has been totally relaxed about disregarding them itself on such a vital matter. I hope that this is not the tip of an iceberg and that there are no similar violations hidden in its administrative systems," he said.

The Commission said the leases for two replacement buildings to be rented out by the Commission were signed on May 12. They will be fitted out in phases between the end of September and November.

Staff relocation will take place in stages, as soon as the fitted-out spaces become available. The Commission also confirmed that four cases of asbestos exposure have been recognised as professional illnesses among Commission employees stationed in the Jean Monnet Building.

Dr Sant had asked why it took the Commission 20 years to move its employees out of the building and whether a definite date had been set by which the Commission planned to have moved all its employees from the building. He also asked how many cases of asbestos exposure had been recognised among Commission employees in the building.



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