



Europäische Metall-Union
European Metal Union
Union Européenne du Metal

Next EMU Meetings

13-14 February 2024	EMU Standards and Technology Working Group	Zürich, Switzerland
18-19 April 2024	EMU Administrative Council	Linz (to be confirmed), Austria
26-27 September 2024	EMU Assembly of Delegates	Lippstadt, Germany

Generative AI: what about defensibility?

Everyone now knows that Generative AI can already perform many tasks cheaper, faster, and, in some cases, better than humans. For companies, the economics are stunning for every hour of work. For business associations as well, AI helps them better analyse the content of reports, whitepapers, think tank studies and a whole range of additional information. For example, with a few words of instruction, a chatbot powered by artificial intelligence—or “Copilot”, as Microsoft calls it—finds a vast file in a computer folder and summarises its contents.

The fundamentals of public affairs remain the same. It is about building relationships, which take personal time and effort. To support this, many AI products need to ensure they provide high accuracy even in rare situations (often referred to as “the tail”). While any given situation may be rare on its own, there tend to be a lot of rare situations in aggregate. This matters because as instances get rarer, the level of investment needed to handle them can be enormous. Thanks to AI, better connections can be made, but then the human element comes into play. Face-to-face meetings remain critical to the development of relationships.

In the meantime, a new role is devoted to business network facilitators. Defensible business models arise in the generative AI space around model creators and model users, and communities around content. Historically, a drop in marginal value of creation drives new demand. When the marginal cost of a good with elastic demand goes down, the demand more than increases to compensate. The AI opportunities for public affairs are there but only for those who are alive to them, as it is likely to see tremendous continued progress for years to come.

How useful are personal protective equipment against welding fumes?

In the framework of the revision of the cancer directive (the CMRD^[1]), the Commission proposes that welding would be only possible with personal protective equipment.

More precisely, the proposal is about introducing work, which is involving exposure to fumes from welding processes containing substances that meet the criteria for CMR category 1A/1B^[2], into Annex I of the CMR Directive.

The inclusion of welding fumes as a generic term in Annex I of the CMR-Directive has major consequences because all welding processes must be then regarded as carcinogenic. This means that the highest and most stringent control regime need to be introduced for all these processes. The impact of stricter rules goes far beyond the metal sector and can affect almost all industry and handicraft sectors.

EMU Members already expressed their disagreement with this proposal. In particular, Koninklijke Metaalunie in the Netherlands did further work to check the relevance of the European Chemical Agency Scoping Study.

They concluded that, the carcinogenicity of welding fumes from steel welding should be viewed with caution. The causality with lung cancer causes is not fully established. The nature and severity of the possible adverse health effects of excessive exposure to welding fumes differs between the different welding processes. The relevant EU legislation and national approaches already provide sufficient tools for effective control of the health risks that can arise from exposure to welding fumes, even if they contain carcinogenic components.

During the meeting of the EMU standardisation working group on 10th October 2023, participants supported the Metaalunie position and will convey the information to the European Insititutions.

[1] Directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic – CMR -substances at work (2004/37/EC).

[2] Set out in the existing Annex I to the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures – CLP – Regulation.

For information: Euroskills 2025 in Herning, Denmark

The EuroSkills Gdańsk 2023 Closing Ceremony concluded with the passing of the WorldSkills Europe flag to the next EuroSkills host nation, Denmark, presenting EuroSkills Herning 2025. Amalie Druerkær Rasmussen from the Danish national team had the honour of receiving the flag on stage.

The Danish city of Herning will host the 9th edition of the EuroSkills Competition in 2025. The event is scheduled for 9-13 September 2025 at MCH Messecenter Herning, the largest exhibition centre in Scandinavia. For more information, visit: euroskills2025.com.

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