Dealing with Asbestos in Austria

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Before the BAN

• Knowledge was there for decades
• Official OSH system downplayed risks
• Eternit was regarded a good company (pay, other benefits)
• Union policy was to use health argument to gain benefits but not to improve conditions
'No' cases

Looking for cases of disease is misleading
• Long latency period
• Poorly informed public health system (little knowledge about occupational diseases)
• Old people are often not seen in connection to former work / workplace
• Generally people did not grow old enough
• Experts withheld expertise
After the Ban

• Easier to touch the issue at all (blame the EU)
• Unions had adopted a more preventive approach
• Experts made themselves heard better
• Rumors appeared that the peak of asbestos related diseases might be reached only in the second half of the 2010s
Joint project

Partners:

- Compulsory workers compensation insurances (general industry and mining)
- Occupational medical firm
- Union related workers education institution
Project aims

• 'early' identification of lung carcinoms
• Creation of a register of people formerly exposed to asbestos
• Improve reporting of asbestos related occ diseases
• Care for formerly exposed including psychosocial and legal aspects
• Improve life quality
Target groups

• Asbest industry
• Rubber workers
• Construction workers
• Electricians
• People repairing automobiles
• Railway workers
Active contacting

• Through shop stewards, union organisation; company registers
• Better information for family doctors in affected areas of the country
• Media
• Workers education and advice centers in affected areas of the country
Data (June 2010)

Contacted clients: 7895
Medical checks performed: 8309
Occ disease cases of different types: 1048
Thank you!