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DA VENIAM SCRIPTIS QUORUM NON GLORIA NOBIS
CAUSA, SED UTILITAS OFFICIUMQUE FUIT

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Dr. TATIANA GOLIKOVA
Minister of Health and Social Development
Ministry of Health
Russia

Re: Russian proposal to ban asbestos in friction material in the Eurasian Economic Community

Dear Minister Golikova,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the Collegium Ramazzini and also as a Foreign Member of the Russian Academy of Medical Science. The Collegium Ramazzini is an international academic society that examines critical issues in occupational and environmental medicine and is dedicated to the prevention of disease and the promotion of health. Currently, 180 renowned clinicians and scientists from around the world, each of whom has been elected to membership, comprise the Collegium. It is independent of commercial interests.

In 2010, the Collegium Ramazzini reiterated its concern about asbestos use in a widely reproduced statement entitled: *Asbestos Is Still with Us: Repeat Call for a Universal Ban.*¹ In this document we pointed out:

- All forms of asbestos are proven human carcinogens. All forms of asbestos cause malignant mesothelioma, lung, laryngeal, and ovarian cancers, and may cause gastrointestinal and other cancers.
- No exposure to asbestos is without risk.
- Russia is now the leading producer of asbestos worldwide.
- There is no such thing as the "controlled use of asbestos."
- Safer substitute products are available and in use in countries all over the world where asbestos is banned.

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¹ http://www.collegiumramazzini.org/download/15_FifteenthCRStatement%282010%29.pdf



Considering the Collegium Ramazzini's position on asbestos therefore, we were very happy to hear the news that the Russian Federal State Unitary Enterprise "NAMI" is proposing a ban on the use of asbestos in friction material in the Eurasian Economic Community. Friction materials are a particular source of concern to health experts because of the high content of asbestos fiber; clearly the higher the content of asbestos, the greater the risk of occupational and environmental contamination.² Asbestos exposure from grinding brake pads and cleaning brake assemblies is a widely recognized health hazard. Manufacturers of new cars and trucks all over the world have converted to safer technologies. China and over 50 other countries have banned the use of asbestos in vehicle friction materials. But asbestos-containing replacement brake parts constitute a continuing, long-term cancer hazard to millions of vehicle repair workers in other countries around the world.

We understand that since the technical regulation was drafted by the Russian Federal State Unitary Enterprise "NAMI" which proposed the ban on the use of asbestos in friction material in the Eurasian Economic Community, included in the draft entitled "The Safety of Wheeled Vehicles," the Russian Chrysotile Association has been exerting enormous pressure for regulators to drop this recommendation and allow the status quo to continue. In our opinion, such an act is contrary to the well-being of Russian citizens. We praise the Ministry of Health for its progressive attempt to safeguard citizens' well-being. Of course, the Collegium Ramazzini would be willing to assist you in any consultative process you might deem useful in order to progress the far-sighted phase-out of asbestos.

Sincerely,

Dr. Philip Landrigan
President Collegium Ramazzini

² The composition of friction material linings and pads can vary from 10 to 70% of asbestos; some textile-based linings can be as much as 60-80% asbestos.