

# Social Dialogue of the European Chemical Industry



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## Working Programme 2007 / 2008 of the Social Dialogue of the European Chemical Industry

The European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers Federation (EMCEF) and the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG), in order to fulfil the aims laid down in their Joint Declaration on the establishment of a formalised Sector Social Dialogue Committee for the European Chemical Industry signed on September 27<sup>th</sup> 2004 on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 agreed in the Plenary Meeting of the Sector Social Dialogue Committee of the European Chemical Industry upon the following two-year Working Programme.

This Working Programme continues the successful activities undertaken by EMCEF and ECEG under their 2005/2006 Working Programme, which had been agreed in February 2005.

In 2007 and 2008 the Social Partners want to focus their work on the following three areas:

- Industrial Policy, Competitiveness and Employment
- Education, Training and Lifelong Learning
- Responsible Care and Health and Safety

For each of these three areas a Working Group should be set up. These Working Groups will report regularly to the Plenary Meetings of the Committee.

In addition the Social Partners will follow-up the enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007 (EU10+2) with specific events or projects in this area focussed on the exchange of experience between the Social Partners of the EU member countries which have joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, the candidate countries for further EU enlargements (mainly Croatia and Turkey) and the members of the EU15 regarding all subjects of Social Affairs agreed upon between both Social Partners.

### ***Industrial Policy, Competitiveness and Employment***

On Industrial Policy, Competitiveness and Employment the Social Partners will follow the work of the **High Level Group on Chemical Industry** to be launched by the EU Commission in 2007 and ensure the transport of any outcome of that group down to the workplaces and the national level. Regarding the **Implementation of REACH**, ECEG and EMCEF will support an effective layout for the REACH implementation and an adequate involvement of the Social Partners in the work of the Helsinki agency. Other important issue will be **Energy Policy, Climate Change** and related topics as well as national technology platforms. In order to support effective change management and to disseminate good practices on **Restructuring and Employment** the Social Partners will undertake a project focussed on

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exchanging experiences and developing some recommendations for successful restructuring (starting from the guidelines agreed upon in the inter-professional Social Dialogue). Furthermore, they will consider a project discussing the effects of **Demographic Changes** on the Chemical Industry which should aim at finding ways to attract young well qualified people to the industry and at keeping elderly employees on board. On many of the subjects in this area of work a close cooperation of the Social Partners with Cefic will again take place.

### ***Education, Training and Lifelong Learning***

On Education, Training and Lifelong Learning ECEG and EMCEF will continue to support the **Comenius project "CITIES"** started by a research group in 2006 with the involvement of the Chemical Industry Social Partners. Support from the Social Partners on European level is possible for other Leonardo or Comenius projects as well. They will follow the relevant initiatives in this area like the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**, the **European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**, the **Bologna** and **Copenhagen Processes**. They will inform their national member federations about these developments and if seen helpful by both sides ECEG and EMCEF might agree on joint positions towards these initiatives, contribute to the preparations for these initiatives in the sector or agree on certain arrangements to help to use these tools within the Chemical Industry. A project will be considered by both organisations around the possibility of **defining and certifying core qualifications** for typical jobs within the Chemical Industry (e.g. the 'operator'), possibly in connection with the so-called **Europass** and a sector specific qualification framework. A follow-up of the recommendations agreed in the report in October 2006 on "Skills for Chemical Businesses – Understanding Society Needs" will be undertaken by the Working Group as well.

### ***Responsible Care and Health and Safety***

ECEG and EMCEF will continue the Working Group which had already been agreed in the **Memorandum of Understanding on Responsible Care** in 2003 between ECEG, Cefic and EMCEF. Within this Working Group the Social Partners will finalise the **publication of a brochure** with the experience presented so far on involving employees and their representatives in Responsible Care initiatives on national level. The idea to **work together with Social Partners of downstream industry sectors on health and safety**, stated in the brochure published in October 2006 on "Working with Chemicals" will be followed-up by organising a project in order to define good practice in the Chemical Industry and than to make these practices available for the downstream industries as well and in order to discuss with those industries their specific needs in this area; as far as products of the Chemical Industry are concerned and those Social Partners are willing to work together with the

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Chemical Industry. The Working Group might consider dealing with further specific health and safety issues depending on the views of ECEG and EMCEF on those subjects.

Furthermore EMCEF and ECEG might organise specific projects in the form of conferences, workshops or studies looking after certain aspects of high importance for their industry or “sub sectors” within their industry. Any relevant representatives of the interests of these sectors and their employees are invited to come forward with any specific proposals. Again, Cefic will be asked by the Social Partners to join forces with them when discussing the subjects in this area of work.

In due time before the end of 2008 the Social Partners will discuss the subjects for a Working Programme for the Dialogue from 2009 onwards.

This Working Programme was approved by the Plenary Meeting of the Sector Social Dialogue Committee of the Chemical Industry on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in Brussels.

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