



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Governance
Social dialogue

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Plenary Meeting
Competitiveness, Employment and Industrial Policy

Meeting 08 December 2017

Draft minutes

Chairs: Emma ARGUTYAN (ECEG) and Alfons DE POTTER (industriAll Europe)

1. Opening and approval of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was approved.

2. Follow-up on European projects

- The brochure summarising the results of the social partners' joint work over the past three years in the frame of the project "[Roadmap 2015-2020](#)" was presented. A particular focus was given on the recently signed 'European Framework of Action on Sustainable Employment and Career Development' and its [toolbox](#) on good practices. The intention is to update the latter annually with new examples.

- The online portal created by the project "Stimulating voluntary mobility of young workers in the chemical industry in the EU" is being finalised and will be launched mid-December. This [portal](#) will be an interface between mentors and mentees. The project is promising to be very successful with over 100 volunteers having expressed their interest to become mentors. The tool will be promoted through national affiliates, the Young Chemist Network (gathering 30.000 students) and through some EURES events/newsletters.

3. SSDC Work Programmes 2018-2020

ECEG and IndustriAll agreed on a new work programme for 2018-2020 (see annex). Key social policy issues to be tackled in the Committee include: employment; education, training and lifelong learning; Competence profiles; Industry 4.0.

Both social partners will also jointly work on a new project related to the impact of digitalization and will cooperate with other stakeholders (CEFIC; VinylPlus) on some

interdisciplinary issues (health & safety, responsible care; industrial and climate change policy).

4. European Pillar of Social Rights

Sven Matzke (DG EMPL) presented an overview of the social pillar initiative which was adopted in April 2017 and proclaimed by the three institutions at the Gothenburg social summit on 17 November. Only minor changes in the preamble were made between the proposed and proclaimed versions.

The European Pillar of Social Rights aims to be a renewed process towards more social convergence, better living and working conditions. Its implementation will be a joint endeavour and will take place through EU legislation (e.g. work-life balance, written statement directive, access to social protection); social partners' involvement and the European Semester.

Rebekah Smith (Business Europe) explained that this initiative initially raised some concerns on the side of the employers in particular regarding the unusual form of the document and questions related to EU competences. The changes made to the preamble addressed those concerns and clarified that this document is essentially a political document with non-binding text. The message conveyed by Business Europe's at the summit was: Europe is one of the best places to live/work/do business and it should remain so. There are challenges to be addressed and the European Semester, through national reforms, is an important process in this regards.

In the absence of the ETUC representative, Sylvain Lefebvre presented the view of the trade union organisation. In a nutshell, it considers the pillar as an important step towards a more social Europe. Those 20 principles should now be translated in an action plan.

5. Celebrating 10 years of ECHA – perspective for a sustainable chemical industry

Geert DANCET (GD) recalled the mission and functioning of ECHA and presented new areas of work such as the EU Chemical legislation finder (a tool being developed to help SMEs), scientific opinions being delivered to support OEL under OSH legislation and discussions on circular economy. GD recalled that ECHA works according to the principles of transparency and independence. It is open to meet stakeholders when necessary. A second review of REACH is foreseen in the first quarter of 2018 and a public consultation on new strategic priorities will be launched.

On behalf of CEFIC, Erwin Annys (EA) underlined the significant work carried out by ECHA in 10 years of existence. Chemical legislation has influenced the entire supply chain and even raised the awareness of end consumers. EA also highlighted that the tool finder will be of great use for smaller players. EA recalled the need to consider how to apply the same rule to what is produced outside the EU in order to ensure a fair competition.

Jochen WILKENS (ECEG) and Sylvain Lefebvre (IndustriAll) congratulated ECHA for its work and listed a few challenges ahead (notably unfair competition on the international stage; SMEs). Both organisations recalled the importance of involving social partners in health and safety discussions.

6. Interplay between REACH and OSH and social partners' reflection

This presentation was jointly made by representatives from three DGs (DG GROW and DG ENV for REACH and DG EMPL for OSH) with the objective to explain the interplay between the two sets of legislation.

The [Communication](#) on the modernisation of the health and safety legislation policy adopted in January 2017 introduced the possibility to use either SCOEL¹ or RAC² for one specific substance. This change had raised some concerns among social partners on the impact this may have on their involvement in legislative developments. Zinta Podniece (DG EMPL) provided reassurance that this change will not impact the way social partners are involved. Giuseppina Luvarà (DG ENV) reminded the active role of the social partners during the RAC discussion. Mehdi Hocine (DG GROW) confirmed the excellent collaboration with DG EMPL and acknowledged the progress made by RAC and SCOEL in the alignment of methodologies (in particular for carcinogenic non-threshold substances).

Both social partners expressed the view that both SCOEL and RAC are complementary and should be maintained. They signed a joint statement explaining their position (see annex).

7. Revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD)

On behalf of CEFIC, Steven Van De Broeck provided an update about the first two revisions of the CMD and explained the scope of the ongoing consultation of social partners to include binding occupational exposure limit values for additional carcinogens and mutagens (deadline 22/01/2017).

CEFIC, ECEG and IndustriAll confirmed their support for future revisions of CMD and the setting of EU-wide binding OELs. ECEG called for a more transparent framework to prioritize substances to be included in Annex III.

8. Cooperation of the social partners of the European Chemical SSDC and VinylPlus on the European PVC industry

Brigitte DERO recalled the nature of the cooperation agreement signed in May 2017 between VinylPlus, ECEG and IndustriAll in which they committed to cooperate on employment-related issues such as health and safety, education & training, knowledge transfer and the sector evolution in the industry recycling PVC. Work is ongoing to define a work programme for 2018-2019.

¹ [Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits](#)

² [Committee for Risk Assessment](#)

Annexes:

Agenda item 2: Roadmap 2015-2020

Agenda item 2: Stimulating voluntary mobility of young workers in the chemical industry in the EU

Agenda item 3: SSDC Work programme 2018-2020

Agenda item 4: Joint Position on REACH and OSH

Agenda item 5: Celebrating 10 years of ECHA

Agenda item 7: Revision of the Carcinogen and Mutagens Directive

Agenda item 8: VinylPlus

<u>Employers</u> Ms Emma Argutyán-Kahlmeyer (EU) Ms Silke Voigt (EU) Mr Paolo Cuneo (IT) Ms Liliana Dombalova (BG) Mr Jochen Wilkens (DE) Mr Stephen Elliott (UK) Ms Katharina Göbel (DE) Mr Koen Laenens (BE) Mr Simon Marsh (UK) Ms Jaana Neuvonen (FI) Mr Klaus-Peter Stiller (DE) Mr Luc Wangen (FR)	<u>Workers</u> Mr Alfons De Potter (BE) Mr Sylvain Lefebvre (EU) Ms Myra Rednoss (EU) Mr Koen De Kinder (BE) Ms Gertraud Lauber (DE) Ms Dimitra Penidis (BE) Mr José Carlos Ruis Palacios (ES) Mr Jose Simoes (PT) Mr Tamas Székely (HU) Mr Thierry Gontier (FR)
<i>External speakers</i>	
Ms Brigitte Dero (VinylPlus) Mr Geoffroy Tillieux (EUPC) Ms Rebekah Smith (Business Europe) Mr Erwin Annys (CEFIC) Mr Steven Van den Broek (CEFIC) Mr Stefan Ladeburg (FECCIA)	
<i>European Commission/ECHA</i>	
Ms Isabelle Laurent (DG EMPL) Mr Mehdi Hocine (DG GROW) Mr Sven Matzke (DG EMPL) Ms Zinta Podniece (DG EMPL) Ms Giuseppina Luvarà (DG ENV) Mr Geert Dancet (ECHA) Mr Frank Buchler (ECHA)	