



**Minutes
of the Plenary Meeting
of the SSDC of the European Chemical Industry
13 October 2015
at ECHA, Annankatu 18, 00121 Helsinki, Finland**

Chairs

Mr. Koen Laenens, ECEG, morning session

Mr. Alfons de Potter, industriAll Europe, afternoon session

1. Approval of the agenda

The Chair welcomed all participants. The agenda was approved. Mr. Tommi Aaltonen, ECHA, gave a technical introduction.

2. Opening and introduction

Mrs. Lindsay Jackson, ECHA, welcomed all participants. She stressed common interests of Social Partners (SP) and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). She especially put forward the recently published “substance infocards” that were produced to make the REACH legislation more accessible both for SMEs and downstream users (<http://echa.europa.eu/information-on-chemicals>).

On behalf of Mr. Stephen Elliott, President of ECEG, Mr. Koen Laenens, chair of the steering committee, thanked ECHA for hosting the event at their premises and the European Commission for financing the project.

Mr. Alfons de Potter, SSDC Chairman for industriAll Europe, put forward the link of the social dialogue (SD) anniversary and the roadmap 2015-2020. He reminded those present of the re-launch of the SD by the Commission’s President Juncker and underlined that cooperation should be at the core of the SD.

On behalf of the European Commission, Mr. Stefaan Ceuppens, DG EMPL, pointed out that the fact that the Roadmap project is being funded by the EU demonstrates the Commission's continued belief in the added value of sectoral SD, as well as the quality of the project itself, of course.



3. “European Chemical Industry Social Partners’ Roadmap 2015-2020” Presentation of the project and methodology

Mr. Laenens introduced the project Roadmap 2015-2020. He especially put forward the evaluation and follow-up of the 2011 competence profiles agreement, to which an addendum would be signed by both SPs on the following day.

Mr. Sylvain Lefebvre, Deputy General Secretary, industriAll Europe, welcomed the Helsinki event as an important step among many others to come. The SSDC now also covered sectors such as rubber and plastics for which actions were foreseen.

Mrs. Emma Argutyan, Secretary General, ECEG, described the five priorities, which commit its signatories to tangible results and actions.

4. What Future for the European Sector Skills Councils

Mr. Laenens introduced the topic by reminding the audience that both SP have been very active in this domain over the past years.

Mr. Ceuppens presented three existing skills instruments with a sectoral dimension.

The European taxonomy of skills, competences, qualifications and occupations (ESCO) is currently being developed. This common "language" will facilitate communication between the worlds of work and education, and will be used among others in the framework of EURES.

Sector Skills Councils (SSC) and Sector Skills Alliances (SSA) had in principle complementary aims. It was however considered that greater coherence and efficiency could be achieved by bringing these instruments together under Erasmus+.

The new-style SSA will have two lots, corresponding broadly to the former SSC (skills intelligence, identifying skills mismatches) and SSA (development of VET curricula), open to a wide range of stakeholders, including SP. Moreover, the budget increased significantly. All in all, the reform should provide for a more stable and coherent framework, as well as increased financing. A call for proposals will be launched in October 2015; information session - 23 November 2015; deadline for submission - 26 February 2016.

Mr. Lefebvre argued that the rules of functioning change too often. The SSC belong to the SP.

Mrs. Argutyan put forward that any application or project should be checked on feasibility by SP.

Mr. Michael Wolters, IG BCE, asked why SP should start with a SSA if the SSC has not brought a clear outcome.

Mr. Simon Marsh, Employment and Communications Director at CIA, ECEG's Head of the Working Group on Health and Safety, commented that it is a struggle to define organisational needs. He welcomed the intention to stick to one system, to be evaluated over the coming years.



Mr. Ceuppens agreed that the SSC framework had been modified several times over the past years ("stop and go"), which is why the new SSA intends to create a more stable framework. He pointed out that the SSC were never "reserved" for SPs only (example of the automotive sector). He reiterated the logic to move from lot 1 (identifying skills mismatches) to lot 2 (filling them).

Mr. de Potter asked who will participate in the SSA - European umbrella organisations or national experts.

Mr. Ceuppens answered that the consortium running a SSC or SSA project will depend on the COM call conditions, the objectives to be achieved, and the relevant (European and national) stakeholders willing to participate.

The chair decided to interrupt the meeting for lunch and to reconvene in the afternoon.

Mr. Simon Marsh suggested that both SP presidents should issue a joint letter to the Commission expressing their concerns about possible developments due to the fact that almost every organisation could submit a SSC/SSA project and, for instance, develop VET curricula without SP's cooperation.

Mr. Lefebvre shared these worries and urged that SP should be at the head of such developments. Action should be taken rapidly.

5. "A New Start for Social Dialogue - Developments at European and national levels – What New Opportunities for the SSDC for the European Chemical Industry?"

Mr. Ceuppens reminded President's Juncker relaunch of the SD during the high-level conference on 5 March 2015. Key aspects were: strengthen SD, competitiveness and fairness, social market economy, involve SP at all levels. Following the relaunch, concrete actions have taken place in order to involve SP more closely in:

- economic governance, e.g.:
 - o Closer association with the European Semester at EU and national level.
 - o Employment Guideline 7, which has been adopted by the Council and mentions that "Member states should involve national parliaments and SP in the design and implementation of relevant reforms and policies".
 - o Investment plan
 - o Strengthening industrial relations and capacity building at national level
 - o Thematic Group 1: SD, economic governance and capacity building
- policy and law making, e.g.:
 - o Thematic Group 2: SD, policy and law making
 - o Consultation workshops on key social policy initiatives
 - o Taking account of SP concerns in the context of the Better Regulation Agenda; see notably Tool #7 of the Toolbox regarding impact assessment requirements for SP initiatives.

Mr. Ceuppens encouraged European SP to seize the opportunities to be involved in policy-making through a close follow-up of EU initiatives and adopting joint positions where appropriate, to consider multi-sectoral initiatives, to improve the link with the national level



(promotion of SD outcomes) and to carefully consider the recommendations that both thematic groups will issue at the beginning of 2016.

Mr. Jochen Wilkens, ECEG's Head of the Working Group on competitiveness and the Managing Director at VCI and Chemie Nord, mentioned that funding is a crucial point.

Mr. Jean Pelin, ECEG's former President and the Executive Director at UIC, put forward that French industry is concerned about the implications at national level, such as the impact of the REFIT programme. He urged to simplify legislation.

Mr. Lutz Mühl, vice-president of ECEG's Steering Committee and the Managing Director at BAVC, suggested to focus on general national SD. Germany would object the creation of benchmarks. SP need to be properly represented and need to know who is involved in decision-making.

Mr. Ceuppens answered that the EU has no competence to intervene in national SD. However, one needs to recognize that member states with a well-functioning SD seem to perform better economically.

Mr. Laenens, on behalf of ECEG, put forward that SD is not a business as such but supports chemical industry. Due to a reduced global market share and growth outside Europe, chemical industry needs to seize its opportunities, for example simplify REACH, agreement on TTIP, etc. ECEG represents NACE 20, 21 and 22 and is in charge of working towards tangible results. Only solid national SD can lead to solid European SD.

Mr. Lefebvre criticised a gap between SD reality and the EU SD relaunch mentioned by Juncker and Schulz. All 43 SD committees have their own realities and challenges. SPs need to work together with ETUC and BE.

6. Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP21)

Presentation and discussion on Joint Position of the SSDC for the European Chemical Industry

Mrs. Argutyan introduced the topic by summarizing SP's position: both support an internationally binding agreement, which is proportionally applicable to all countries. SP do not want an agreement, which could hinder competitiveness in Europe while the rest of the world continues to act like now. She noted that thanks to chemical industry, new technologies are developed by companies but further support is necessary.

Mr. Laenens stressed that chemical industry is part of the solution and contributes to lower carbon emissions. The EU should not add burdens to industry given the fact that the EU is responsible for only 10% of global emissions.

Mr. Lefebvre reiterated that SP should issue a joint position on the issue. Mrs. Lallemand urged to have a common position by mid-November to be credible. A joint position should be agreed by the following week giving time to members for consultation.

Mr. Pelin made the point that SP should look beyond Paris because a common position for COP21 at this point is too late to be issued given the fact that this subject already became a governmental affair.



Mr. De Potter argued that SD needs to be visible on climate and energy issues. SP should issue a common position in order to prove that they are capable of being part of the solution for reduced emissions.

Mr. Michael Mersmann, Head of the International Department, IG BCE, declared that many positions are already available (IG BCE, energy stakeholders, industriAll global) and European SP should be active on such aspects.

Mr. Mühl proposed to leave aside difficult aspects and to concentrate on common points in order to speed up the process. The paper should have a mid-term impact beyond Paris.

Mrs. Argutyán suggested to have two parts – for Paris and beyond.

7. “Re-industrialisation - What role and place for the chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industries?”

Mr. Wilkens held a speech on re-industrialisation on behalf of ECEG.

He emphasised that growth forms the basis for the chemical industry. However, the industry share decreased during the last years, which shows that re-industrialisation is not on track. Highest industry shares are in Czech Republic, Ireland and Hungary. Competitiveness could be encouraged by reduction in European energy prices and encouraging more R&D investments. The Commission disposes of many studies mentioning reasons for little competitiveness but there is a lack of implementation. Gross domestic expenditure on R&D is currently about 2% in the EU, aiming for 3 %. High tech industry continues to grow in the EU. A worrying factor is the decreasing number of patent registration. The fact that raw material prices have decreased is positive for the chemical industry but future developments cannot rely on this advantage. Moreover, he criticised the high increase of EU regulations on health, safety and environment, which lead to more bureaucracy, more costs and less competitiveness. The future of European chemical industry lies in exports. Regarding ETS, chemical industry has already delivered its share. Other sectors have to follow instead of chemical industry being asked for even more efforts.

8. Competitiveness and job growth - the future of the European Chemical industry

Mr. Lutz Mühl explained that as competitiveness has multiple aspects, discussing competitiveness and job growth signifies that sustainable economic success demands economic actions and social understanding. SD partners contribute to this by encouraging long-lasting solutions for workers, creating safe jobs and developing new standards aiming at chemical industry to become a role model both on EU and global levels.

Mr. Lefebvre reiterated that politics on energy, competitiveness, job growth and re-industrialisation are interlinked. Investments are crucial to preserve current industries.



9. “Implementing REACH for Nanomaterials – Recent developments”

Mrs. Jenny Holmqvist, ECHA, spoke on recent developments in implementing REACH for nanomaterials. Nanomaterials are not an isolated issue and one should always keep the balance between benefits and safety in mind. ECHA is responsible for implementing REACH. However, ECHA’s work is hampered by uncertainties such as review of nanomaterials definition, increase number of appeals on compliance decisions and slow progress in the revision of REACH annexes. She presented ECHA’s 3 year work plan including implementation of REACH, CLP and BPR to substances in nano forms, improvement of the quality of data submitted by industry, addressing substances of concern, enhancing transparency around risk and benefits of nanomaterials on the EU market, launch of a new dissemination portal beginning of next year and giving lower priority to research projects due to a high number of ongoing FP7 projects. To conclude, she mentioned that REACH remains the best legal instrument to ensure safe use of nanomaterials on the EU market. ECHA needs industry support to ensure that all aspects are considered in the process and to clarify potentially existing uncertainties in the implementation of REACH and CLP.

10. CCMI initiative “Nanotechnology for a competitive chemical industry”

Mrs. Iris Wolf, IG BCE, presented the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI) initiative on “Nanotechnology for a competitive chemical industry” at the EESC. The CCMI deals with issues which beside industrial change also encompass environment, competition, jobs et al. The Consultative Commission was drafting an own opinion on nanomaterials, which would be voted on in November by the entire EESC before its formal adoption. Inter alia, the idea of establishing a European observatory instead of registries, which are little effective and cost intensive, was considered. Mr. Otto Linher, Deputy Head of Unit for Chemicals, DG GROW, who would be attending the Social Partners Conference on the following day, was involved in this CCMI initiative on nanomaterials.

Mr. Marsh informed the audience that in the UK public has a different attitude towards nanomaterials. It was easier to identify the benefits when nanotechnology addresses serious social concerns. Furthermore, there is lack of clear evidence of potential future harms.

Mrs. Argutyan welcomed that nanotechnology was now high on the agenda. She expressed gratitude that the ECEG was involved as observer at the CCMI public hearing and looked forward to the CCMI final report.

11. Youth employment, VET/European Alliance for Apprenticeships

Mr. Marsh reminded the audience of the Riga event in June 2015, when ECEG and industriAll Europe signed a pledge in the presence of Commissioner Thyssen and committed to joint action to attract young people to chemical and related industries. He suggested considering how to imply apprentices in SD.

Mr. Maximilian Lennarz, apprentice at BASF, presented his views on apprenticeships. Based on his participation at the Riga event, at which many European apprentices discussed their



national systems, he focused on aspects, which should be taken into consideration on EU-level in order to improve the quality and success of apprenticeships. Riga participants criticised a lack of mentoring, exclusively theoretical formation and irregular revenues. He explained that BASF Germany offers were threefold: theory, practice and a combination of both, which led to more independent work, motivated apprentices and increased the possibility to be hired in future. Aspects, such as a need of a mentor and good communication between companies and schools were essential to offer quality education.

Mr. Lefebvre, confirmed Mr. Marsh's idea to further involve young people into the SD process. The EAfA included all relevant stakeholders and aimed at improving the quality, image and supply of apprenticeships.

12. Adoption of the Work Programme 2016-2017

Both SP presented their work programme 2016-2017. It was drafted in parallel with the Roadmap 2015-2020 since the project is a tool to implement the work programme.

Having in mind that ECEG since April was also representing pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industries, the respective associations would be contacted for improved cooperation. Regarding sustainable employment, a new voluntary, non-binding agreement could be drafted by the end of 2016. Competence profiles need to be further disseminated especially in CEECs. The ambitious work programme was approved and signed.

13. Concluding remarks

Mr. Laenens thanked the Commission for financial support and Mr. Stefaan Ceuppens for his pragmatic, result-oriented work.

Mr. De Potter summarised the next steps to be taken: issuing a common position on climate and energy policies (the secretariats would review amendments jointly and agree on the final text) and drafting a letter to the Commission on competence profiles.



Participants list

SSDC Chemical Industry Plenary

ECHA, Helsinki, 13 October 2015

N°	Name	First Name	Country	Organisation	SP
1	Asenova Whitehead	Lyusienda	Bulgaria	BCCI	ECEG
2	Argutyan	Emma		ECEG	ECEG
3	Billebault	Christian	FRANCE	CFTC-CMTE	industriAll Europe
4	Bousquenaud	Dominique	FRANCE	FCE-CFDT	industriAll Europe
5	Budai	Ivan	Hungary	MAVESZ	ECEG
6	Ceuppens	Stefaan	GUEST	DG EMPL	
7	De Kinder	Koen	BELGIUM	ACV/CSC LBC-NVK	industriAll Europe
8	De Potter	Alfons	BELGIUM	ACV/CSC BIE	industriAll Europe
9	Deguara	Jason	MALTA	GWU	industriAll Europe
10	Dombalova	Lilyana	Bulgaria	BCCI	ECEG
11	Faimali	Anne	FRANCE	FCE-CFDT	industriAll Europe
12	Franzel	Jürgen	GERMANY	DGB IG BCE	industriAll Europe
13	Goebel	Katharina	Germany	BAVC	ECEG
14	Helten-Kindlein	Birgit	GERMANY	DGB IG BCE	industriAll Europe
15	Holmqvist	Jenny	GUEST	ECHA	
16	Karjalainen	Mia	Finland	Kemianteollisuus ry	ECEG
17	Laenens	Koen	Belgium	essenscia	ECEG
18	Lallemand	Yseult		industriAll Europe	industriAll Europe
19	Lauber	Gerti	GERMANY	DGB IG BCE	industriAll Europe
20	Lefebvre	Sylvain		industriAll Europe	industriAll Europe
21	Lennartz	Maximilian	Apprentice	BASF	ECEG
22	Marsh	Simon	UK	CIA	ECEG
23	Mersmann	Michael	GERMANY	DGB IG BCE	industriAll Europe
24	Miara	Mirosław	POLAND	NSZZ Solidarnosc SPCH	industriAll Europe
25	Muehl	Lutz	Germany	BAVC	ECEG
26	Neuvonen	Jaana	Finland	Kemianteollisuus ry	ECEG
27	O'Leary	Alan	IRELAND	SIPTU	industriAll Europe
28	Pelin	Jean	France	UIC	ECEG
29	Penidis	Dimitra	BELGIUM	ACV/CSC BIE	industriAll Europe
30	Reibsch	Reinhard	GUEST		



N°	Name	First Name	Country	Organisation	SP
31	Reinikainen	Taru	FINLAND	PRO	industriAll Europe
32	Rosqvist	Marko	FINLAND	TEAM	industriAll Europe
33	Sanchez Villa	Angel	SPAIN	UGT FITAG	industriAll Europe
34	Scheuer	Michal	POLAND	NSZZ Solidarnosc SPCH	industriAll Europe
35	Schiewek	Iris	FINLAND	PRO	industriAll Europe
36	Selles	Laurent	France	UIC	ECEG
37	Steinhoff	Ruth	Germany	BAVC	ECEG
38	Székely	Tamás	HUNGARY	MSZSZ VDSZ (CE)	industriAll Europe
39	Troch	Geertje	BELGIUM	ACV / LBC-NVK	
40	Van den Bossche	Walter		industriAll Europe	industriAll Europe
41	Voigt	Silke		ECEG	ECEG
42	Wilkens	Jochen	Germany	Chemienord e.V.	ECEG
43	Wolf	Iris	GERMANY	DGB IG BCE	industriAll Europe
44	Wolters	Michael	GERMANY	DGB IG BCE	industriAll Europe