



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Social Dialogue, Social Rights, Working Conditions, Adaptation to Change
Social Dialogue, Industrial Relations

Brussels, 28 March 2008

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE "CHEMICAL INDUSTRY"

WORKING GROUP MEETING

held on 29 February 2008 in Brussels

DRAFT MINUTES

Chairpersons: Reinhard REIBSCH (EMCEF) and Catherine BEUDON (ECEG)

Commission representative: Dirk HADRICH (DG EMPL)

1. Welcome by the chairpersons and the European Commission. Approval of the agenda.

The social partners were welcomed by the chairpersons and the Commission. The agenda was approved.

2. Health and Safety Initiatives at EU level - Carcinogens Directive

Dirk Hadrich reminded the social partners on the second-phase consultation of the social partners on the protection of workers from exposure to CMR substances at work. This phase was launched on 16 April 2007 and the social partners were invited to give their opinion on the possible direction of any further Community action. All related documents can be found on the website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/consultations_en.htm

In the area of employment, social affairs and equal opportunities the social partners have an important role to help shaping EU policies on related matters. The Commission

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http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/sectorial37_en.htm

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would appreciate if the social partners could take their opportunities to respond in the framework of Art. 138 consultations. The Commission also believes that the social partners have good capacity within their sectoral committees to develop responsible ideas for their sectors.

Social partners confirmed their willingness to deal with the issue and to disseminate the relevant documents.

3a. Good Practice Presentations: Responsible Care in Poland

Agata Drewniak reported about responsible care initiatives and new cooperation with trade unions in Poland (annex 1).

EMCEF welcomed the good overview and found it would prove successful working together for concrete results.

3b. Good Practice Presentations: Presentation on joint project of German Chemical Industry Social Partners "Wittenberg-Prozess Workshop on Responsible Care"

Stefan Strässer presented an overview on the Wittenberg-project of the German chemical industry social partners. It started on 5 July 2007 with the aim to renew and to consolidate the basis of the social market economy (annex 2). Results of all workshops in the framework of this project will be presented in June 2008 in Berlin.

4. Social Partner Brochure on Good Practice in Responsible Care

A draft brochure was presented that included a number of examples from different countries. The contained examples were found to be very impressive for Member States and companies. The brochure was seen as a tool to present social partner activities. It was decided to include results of the project "Improvement of health and safety at the workplace" and to wait for other contributions until 20 March 2008. A special working group should agree on the way how to proceed with the aim to approve it in the plenary meeting on 21 May and to publish it in mid 2008. J. Wilkens, B. Thier, R. Oswald and A. De Potter volunteered to manage the further procedure.

5. Project Improvements in Health and Safety as target for Social Dialogue

Reinhard Reibsch reported on the project "Improvements in Health and Safety as target for Social Dialogue" (annex 3). A low record of occupational diseases was found within the sector in EU15. In some new Member States compensation was found to be more important than prevention of diseases. Recommendations shall be developed in the final conference in April 2008.

6. Information on a Sector Meeting of Experts at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in December 2007 on handling of hazardous substances and possible follow-up activities on European level

Kemal Ozkan reported on ILO initiatives on dangerous substances, international cooperation, awareness raising and capacity building of the ILO (annex 4). Specific attention was given in particular to the UN-wide strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM) and the globally harmonised systems of labelling (GHS).

7. Proposals for possible new joint Social Partner Projects

EMCEF considered REACH to improve information on chemicals but not to improve the health and safety working conditions. EMCEF saw 4 areas of possible future activities: Information on risks, training & education, personal protective equipment and medical check ups. Concrete proposals for a new project should be developed for the plenary meeting on 21 May. This new project could be submitted for funding by the Commission in September 2008.

Qualitative and quantitative risk assessment in the framework of Seveso II could also be an issue for a new project dealing with fatal accidents, carcinogens and emergency plans.

8. Update on CITIES project and contributions from Social Partners

Leo Gros described the CITIES project and the general structure of the CITIES homepage <https://cities.rikanise.net> (annex 5). He mentioned several personal statements that he has already received but he invited social partners to contribute to certain materials (Commerce and innovation, chemistry changes everything, working chemistry, careers from chemistry). Also country overviews concerning the situation of the national chemical industries and any initiatives on secondary school teaching would be appreciated if this could be submitted by email to gros@fh-fresenius.de.

9. Project “The Employability of Bachelor Graduates: A Spotlight on the Bachelors of Chemistry and Chemical Sciences”

Leo Gros explained the background of the project "The employability of Bachelor graduates: A Spotlight on the Bachelors of Chemistry and Chemical Sciences" (annex 6). The basis question in the framework of this project would be to see if Bachelor graduates are fit for the labour market. The aims would be to compare different countries and to examine how these graduates can be made as productive as possible in short time. Social partners were invited to help obtaining data and relevant information sources.

It was reported that in Germany currently the first Bachelor graduates would have finished their studies and would reach the labour market. Therefore, the project would come at an interesting point of time.

10. European Commission Project “Comprehensive sectoral analysis of emerging competences and economic activities in the European Union”

William Keag explained the background and the methodology of the project “Comprehensive sectoral analysis of emerging competences and economic activities in the European Union” (annex 7). The aim of this pilot project would be to anticipate and to analyse change within the sector. TNO would be the responsible contractor of the Commission for this project. The social partners are invited to make themselves available for working with the contractor. A draft final report is scheduled for October 2008.

11. High Level Group Chemical Industry – Presentation of Report on Innovation and Human Resources

Reinhard Reibsch reported on the activities of the working group "Innovation and human resources" that met on 18 December 2007. He regretted that the group focussed more on innovation and less on the aspect of human resources.

12. Project “EQF Chemistry”

Frank Schmidt presented the Leonardo da Vinci project "EQF Chemistry" (annex 8). It defines specific activities at 8 different levels of education. The project should be finalised by October 2008 and published on www.eqf-chemie.de.

13. Presentation of Study “Skills, Training and Education”

Michael Haak presented the project “Skills, Training and Education”, the joint interests of the chemical regions and the objectives of the ECRN (annex 9). Reports of the project can be downloaded from www.ecrn.net.

EMCEF suggested creating a working group that should reflect in general on projects related to skills and that should a pragmatic and systematic approach on such initiatives.

14. Outlook on activities of the Working Group in 2008 (and 2009)

The group decided to set up a task force that should build upon existing projects and that should develop future projects. Lutz Mühl, Catherine Beudon and one EMCEF-member should participate in this task force.

15. Any other business

Next meetings:

21 May 2008 (PL)

7 July 2008 (WG)

29 September 2008 (WG)

5 December 2008 (WG)

The annexes can be downloaded from the "library" on the website of the SSDC Chemicals Industry: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/sectorial37_en.htm