



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

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

Brussels, 11 June 2009

### **SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE "CHEMICAL INDUSTRY"**

#### **PLENARY MEETING**

**held on 13 May 2009 in Brussels**

#### **DRAFT MINUTES**

Chairpersons: Jean Pelin (ECEG) and Reinhard Reibsch (EMCEF)

Commission representatives: Dirk Hadrich (DG EMPL), Daniele Colombo (DG ENTR)

#### **1. Opening**

The social partners were welcomed by Fons de Potter (CSC), Jean Pelin (ECEG) and Dirk Hadrich (DG EMPL).

#### **2. EU Chemical industry in spring 2009 – the global economic crisis, its consequences and possible future strategies**

Jean Pelin referred to the current structural crisis and drew the attention to the necessity to provide fruitful contributions to minimise the impact of the crisis. Various achievements of the Committee were mentioned as important steps to address the challenges of the sector.

Reinhard Reibsch referred to different levels of social conditions that were observed in different countries. It would be proven that low social conditions would pose the major obstacles for the successful management of the crisis problems.

#### **3. Report from High Level Group on the competitiveness of the European Chemical Industry and its recommendations**

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Daniele Colombo (DG ENTR) reported on the setting up, work organisation, challenges and recommendations of the High Level Group on the competitiveness of the chemical industry (annex 1). The Final Report of the HLG is available at [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/chemicals/hlg/hlg2/hlg\\_index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/chemicals/hlg/hlg2/hlg_index.htm) .

Reinhard Reibsch commented on the objectives, scope and results of the High Level Group especially regarding social issues and human resources (annex 2).

René van Sloten (CEFIC) presented characteristics of the chemical industry, he outlined the conditions that were necessary for beneficial global competition and he drew conclusions for the future of the sector (annex 3). He estimated that the current crisis would likely lead to more participation of workers.

#### **4. Presentation of draft joint declaration of the European chemical industry social partners on the global economic crisis**

Jean Pelin referred to the Committee's declaration that had been adopted in March 2009. It would be essential to react to the current crisis in an intelligent and innovative way. The importance of the social partners in this respect would grow but they could only provide one of many keys that would be necessary to overcome the current crisis.

Fons De Potter (CSC) explained the specific difficulties of the chemical industry in the current crisis, the necessity and importance to maintain employment as well as social principles, while on the same time the global competitiveness of the sector should be increased (annex 4).

The social partners several aspects of the draft joint declaration on the global economic crisis in particular the key drivers of the crisis, the impact of ETS and REACH II on the global competitiveness and certain long-term measures that could be taken.

The draft joint declaration on the global economic crisis was unanimously approved.

It can be downloaded from the database:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=8769](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=8769)

#### **5. European sectoral social dialogue 2009 & beyond – status quo and future trends from the perspective of the European Commission**

Dirk Hadrich reported on the currently ongoing review of the functioning of sectoral social dialogue that needs regularly to be done on the basis of Article 5 of Commission Decision 98/500/EC. On the basis of the contributions that had been sent on the questionnaire of October 2008, there are currently debates on the types of results of sectoral social dialogue, the involvement in impact assessments, the administrative capacity, etc. A very open brainstorming has been undertaken with the Liaison Forum and more concrete conclusions should be drawn during the next months.

#### **6. Sectoral social dialogue in the European chemical industry – activities, recent achievements, status quo and future tasks**

The social partners discussed the types of results of their dialogue, the concreteness of their contributions, the added value of social dialogue for the European Union and the possibilities to negotiate binding agreements of both sides.

It was mentioned that the hairdressers would not be covered by REACH and that good cooperation with them would be important since they are downstream users of chemicals.

## **7. Presentation of the draft 2009/2010 Working programme for the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee Chemical Industry**

The social partners discussed the draft work programme for 2009/2010 and its concreteness. The work programme should set the framework for the future work and it should leave some flexibility for the way of working together. There was the wish to have a wording that is as concrete as possible.

The draft work programme for 2009/2010 was unanimously approved.

It can be downloaded from the library on the website of the chemical industry sector:

[http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral\\_social\\_dialogue/library?l=/chemical\\_industry/2009/2009\\_2010\\_enpdf/EN\\_1.0\\_&a=d](http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/chemical_industry/2009/2009_2010_enpdf/EN_1.0_&a=d)

## **8. AOB**

### Next meetings:

7 July 2009 (WG)

30 September 2009 (WG)

30 November 2009 (WG)

The annexes can be downloaded from the "library" on the website of the SSDC Chemicals Industry: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=480&langId=en&intPageId=17>