



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

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

Brussels, 08 November 2010

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE "CHEMICAL INDUSTRY"

WORKING GROUP MEETING

held on 11 October 2010 in Brussels

DRAFT MINUTES

I) Working group "Competitiveness, Employment and Industrial Policy"

Chairpersons: Ladislav Novak (ECEG) and Reinhard Reibsch (EMCEF)

1. Opening and welcome

The social partners were welcomed by Ladislav Novak (ECEG), Reinhard Reibsch (EMCEF) and Dirk Hadrich (DG EMPL).

2. Approval of the agenda and approval of minutes of the last meeting

The agenda and the minutes of last meeting were approved.

3. ETS – a 30% reduction target for the European Industry? Update

Dirk Hadrich (DG EMPL) explained the background of the Commission Communication of May 2010 that assessed the costs, benefits and policy options of moving beyond a 20% reduction commitment in the light of the economic circumstances and the development of international climate negotiations. There was also a detailed assessment of the risks for carbon leakage included, taking into account the pledges agreed in Copenhagen. The Commission has not proposed to step-up its 2020 emission reduction target as the conditions that had been set were not met with the Copenhagen agreement. The Communication has nonetheless allowed an informed debate among

Member States under the Belgian Presidency. This would be an essential step for the EU in order to be prepared if and when the conditions are right for a decision to be taken.

The Environment Council proposed to continue this process next year. In particular, Member States requested the Commission to consider the link between the Roadmap towards a Low Carbon Economy by 2050, incl. a 2030 milestone and the "short term" efforts by 2020. There is commitment to deepen the analysis of the strategic role of future climate targets, and to find out how Climate Action could bring sustainable growth, how EU could further reap first mover advantage related to new low carbon technologies, and how EU could create the right framework conditions for the business opportunities, jobs, and growth of the future.

Early 2011, the Commission intends to submit a Communication to the European Council and the European Parliament on the development of a "*Roadmap for a low carbon economy by 2050*" outlining a strategy to enable and steer the transition. This document should explore paths to "decarbonise" the European economy most effectively and in ways that stimulate technological innovation, boost economic growth and job creation, and strengthen the EU's energy security.

Jean-Claude Lahaut (CEFIC) referred to open speculations on the market and to the effects and possibilities of financial institutions that can play on the market. He suggested preparing a draft joint declaration warning about the 30% target.

The social partners agreed on the need for a global framework, the speculation risks, the necessity to maintain the strong industrial basis in Europe and they wanted to prepare a position paper during the coming weeks.

It was mentioned that the Danish Parliament would most likely recommend the 30% target while referring to the advantages of having high standards.

4. The international year of chemistry

Franco Bisegna (CEFIC) gave a presentation on the objectives, themes, key messages and planned events of the 2011 international year of chemistry (annex 1).

Some more events, conferences and school visits were mentioned to take place in the Czech Republic and in Hungary.

5. REACH implementation: support for SMEs

Erwin Annys (CEFIC) reported about REACH implementation, the number of registrations, the available guidance and the feedback of national associations (annex 2).

Social partners talked about the efforts of SMEs to register chemicals, the funding possibilities through the European Investment Bank, the possibilities of cost-sharing and the definition of intermediates that need to be registered.

Social partners decided to further discuss in future the information and details on the 12 ongoing studies and the economic financial details for cost-sharing.

6. Round table: short country reports from the participants on the current economic situation in the sector

Member from different countries reported on their national economic situation, growth, employment rates and developments.

7. Current social affairs issues at European level

Andreas Ogrinz (ECEG) referred to the Commission's Green Paper "Towards adequate, sustainable and safe European pension systems". There would be many very different national systems, the subsidiarity would be important and the Commission should not intervene too much. Solvency and issues to accomplish long-term growth should be subject to social dialogue.

8. Follow up on the High-Level group on the competitiveness of the European chemical industry

Ladislav Novak (ECEG) presented information on different initiatives taken to implement the recommendations of the High-Level group on the competitiveness of the European chemical industry (annex 3).

Social partners found it most important to look at the issue of competitiveness and at recommendations for SMEs.

9. Any other business

The Romanian member reported on the establishment of the national sectoral social dialogue committee in Romania, its topics of discussion and the governments plans to reduce pensions.

II) Working group "Health & safety and responsible care"

Chairpersons: Jochen Wilkens (ECEG) and Reinhard Reibsch (EMCEF)

1. Opening and welcome

The social partners were welcomed by Jochen Wilkens (ECEG) and Reinhard Reibsch (EMCEF).

2. Approval of the agenda and approval of minutes of the last meeting

The agenda was approved with item 5 on OSHA activities postponed to the next meeting. Rolf Gehring from the construction sector was welcomed and special attention should be given under AOB to a joint project with the construction sector.

The minutes of last meeting were approved.

3. Safe use of gloves for the handling of solvents

Dorothee Arns (ESIG) reported on ESIG's programmes, campaigns and guidelines related to the safe handling of solvents (annex 4).

Social partners identified certain issues that should be further dealt with and they found it would be necessary to deal with the available materials in the same way and with the same commitment at European and national.

4. Nanotechnology from a health and safety point of view

Dirk Hadrich (DG EMPL) referred to the Commission's activities on nanosciences and nanotechnologies, the preparation of a new Action Plan on nanotechnologies and the respective Impact Assessment. The work concerning the development of a definition of nanomaterial is expected to finish by end October 2010 and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks should give an opinion afterwards.

Due to the request of the EP the Commission services would currently assess the usefulness and practical feasibility of an inventory of nanomaterials and nanoproducts including their types and uses.

Concerning risks at the workplace the provisions of Directive 89/391/EEC generally imply an obligation for the employers to carry out a proper risk assessment in the workplace and to take proper and appropriate risk management measures. Due to the specific characteristics of nanomaterials also specific workplace risk management guidance may be necessary and so a consultation of the Tripartite Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work has been launched. Furthermore a Study on health and safety of nanomaterials for workers would be launched in the 2nd quarter of 2011 to look at the issues of worker protection, types of exposures, information requirements, the effectiveness of risk management measures, the mode of action of nanomaterials compared to traditional chemicals and the standards/legislation or Occupational Exposure Limits existing at national level.

Social partners discussed the nature of risks related to nanomaterials and good practices that are already available such as the use of gloves or the guidance document on varnishes.

5. Impact of REACH implementation in downstream industries

Erwin Annys (CEFIC) reported on the implementation of REACH in downstream industries and their potential problems especially not to meet the registration deadline (annex 5).

Social partners discussed the possibility that enforcement authorities would visit companies that would need to show registration numbers.

6. European Responsible Care conference 2010

Bernhard Thier (CEFIC) reported on responsible care priorities in Europe, conferences, award, partnerships and performance indicators (annex 6).

Social partners found the trademark Responsible Care very valuable and it should be further worked on this in future.

7. Any other business

Rolf Gehring (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers) informed about the intentions of the constructions sector to propose a project to the Commission for funding in March 2011. There would be the problem in the construction sector that the workplace would frequently change and that producer information on construction chemicals would often be too difficult to understand. The project could look at different information systems that are already available, it should answer to questions and needs and it should also facilitate the implementation of REACH for the construction sector.

The social partners discussed the specific challenges of the construction sector such as the understanding of pictograms and they decided to cooperate with the construction sector for the proposed project.

Next meetings:

13 September 2010 (negotiation)

11 October 2010 (WG)

2 December 2010 (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>