



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 03 December 2018

Minutes

Chairs: (ECEG) and (industriAll Europe)

1. Opening and welcome

The agenda of the meeting was approved.

2. Roundtable discussion on Reprotoxic Substances

The Commission's assessment on the possible inclusion of reprotoxic substances in the Carcinogen and Mutagen Directive is ongoing and results are expected early 2019.

European social partners and CEFIC have signed a joint declaration stating their position: (1) reprotoxic substances should be added to the CMD Directive; (2) if exposure cannot be avoided, risks have to be managed; and (3) a difference should be made between threshold and non-threshold substances. The Commission has integrated the proposed option in its impact assessment (include reprotoxic substances in the CMD directives with differences between threshold and non-threshold substances).

Some discussions followed on the need to inform workers properly. Sylvain Lefebvre recalled the existence of an information document which could be translated and disseminated further to affiliates.

3. Summary of past activities

Report of May VinylPlus-Workshop: Health and Safety at PVC Converters and Recyclers

Maria Estela Izquierdo presented the main outcomes of the workshop on simplified safety data sheets organized by VinylPlus in cooperation with the ECEG and industriAll Europe in May 2018 (see annex). Based on the results of the workshop, she communicated the next activities planned for 2019 in cooperation with Sectoral Social Partners, i.e. plant visits to observe the application of the Health and Safety Regulations and the application of the simplified safety data sheets at use.

National example – Greece – safety data sheets

Aneti Voulomenou presented (see annex) the results of an EU-project implemented in Greece (2013-2015) which aimed at making safety datasheets information more accessible and user-friendly for workers. It resulted in the creation of Workplace Instruction Cards (WIC) which are 1-page documents containing basic information and pictograms. WICs are generated by an online platform and are available in 5 languages. They can be easily accessible by using the application and scanning the product's barcode. More information can be found on www.life-read.gr. Sectoral Social Partners recognised that the project represented a good initiative to improve transparency and raise awareness of consumers, employers and workers, supporting the idea of implementing similar methods and practices in other European countries.

European Network for Silica: Agreement on Workers' Health Protection. Through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products Containing it

Florence Lumen briefly recalled (see annex) the context and objectives of the multi-sectoral agreement on Crystalline Silica signed in 2006 which translates into concrete support (guide of best practices, 60 fiches and videos). Proper implementation is ensured by a well-defined monitoring process based on quantitative indicators (number of workers concerned; number of workers trained; number of workers having received the fiches). The complementarity of the agreement with existing legislation is recognised in the CMD Directive (referred to in the annex of the 1st revision batch of the CMD; article in 2nd revision batch stating that social partners agreements will be listed on OSHA website)

Formaldehyde – Joint position

1,7 million workers are potentially exposed to formaldehyde, a substance used for specific applications (e.g. glues & resins, coatings) in sectors producing wood panels, paint or textiles. The substance was included in the third batch of the CMD revision.

Formacare (the formaldehyde sector group of Cefic representing key European producers) and social partners showed their support for the Commission proposal by means of a joint letter. They now intend to sign a "Formacare's Voluntary Agreement" for the immediate application of the threshold of 0,3 ppm. A Governance Committee, which social partners are invited to join, will be created by Formacare to oversee the implementation of the agreement and to provide recommendations and accessing data.

OSHA campaign Healthy workplaces: manage dangerous substances

Brenda O'Brian recalled the objectives of the OSHA campaign which aims at raising awareness of the importance of preventing risks from dangerous substances, promoting risk assessment and increasing knowledge of the legislative framework that is already in place to protect workers.

ECEG and IndustriAll are official partners of the campaign. National affiliates are encouraged to: contact their national contact points to organise events; enter good practices in the Good Practices Award database; and use the campaign logo or available presentations on OSHA's website.

The good practice awards will take place in November 2019 and the deadline for submission is mid-December 2018. Participants are invited to visit the [campaign website](#).

4. Future activities

This agenda point is postponed due to lack of time and it will be discussed during the next Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee scheduled for the 11th of March 2019 .

5. Report publication – Our future workplace – digital transformation in the chemical industry

Jean-Philippe Kramer presented (see [annex](#)) the results of the EU-wide research survey which they conducted among social partners' affiliates and companies active in the sector. The objectives of the survey are to analyse the level of awareness and identify sector specific challenges related to innovation and digital transformation.

The study highlighted the current level of digital awareness, as well as the impacts of digital transformation on workers' competences and skills, on their working conditions and on their health and safety. Overall conclusions mainly concerned skills (shift towards more advanced digital skills and transversal skills) and the working environment (changed through mobile working with greater employee autonomy and increased multi-tasking). Respondents highlighted that collective agreements should address more intensively the issues of mobile working, working-time flexibility and qualifications. Next step is to define jointly sustainable actions for social partners to address those key issues.

6. European Commission – Report on the CMD Directive

Alick Morris recalled the context and objectives of the modernisation of EU Occupational Health and Safety Policy and presented the state of play of the different updates of the Carcinogen and Mutagen Directive that set binding Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs) for carcinogen substances (see [annex](#)).

7. Update on the cooperation between Vinylplus and European Chemical Social Partners

Brigitte Dero briefly underlined the importance of the cooperation established in February 2017 between Vinylplus and the European Social Partners of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee of the Chemical industry.

8. Any other business

The dates for the 2019 meetings were communicated: 11/03/2019; 20/06/2019 and 18/11/2019.

Annexes:

Agenda item 2: ETUC Reprotoxic
Agenda item 3: Formacare
Agenda item 3: Greece
Agenda item 3: VinylPlus
Agenda item 4: Guide for better work
Agenda item 5: Our future workplace
Agenda item 6: CMD

Participants 03/12/2018:

<u>Employers</u> Mr Yves Verschueren (EU) Mr Koen Laenens (BE) Ms Emma Argutyán-Kahlmeyer (EU) Ms Liliana Dombalova (BG) Ms Katharina Göbel (DE) Ms Elisa Hensel (DE) Ms Eleonora Isopo (EU) Mr Simon Marsh (UK) Ms Jaana Neuvonen (FI) Mr Klaus-Peter Stiller (DE) Mr Gabor Szikszay (HU) Ms Areti Voulomenou (GR)	<u>Workers</u> Ms Dimitra Penidis (BE) Mr Sylvain Lefebvre (EU) Ms Myra Rednoss (EU) Mr Koen De Kinder (BE) Ms Gertraud Lauber (DE) Ms Maike Niggemann (EU) Mr Taru Reinikainen (FI) Mr Alberto Simoes (PT) Mr Tamas Székely (HU) Ms Jenni Uljas (FI) Mr Bruno Vannoni (FR)
<i>External speakers</i>	
Mr Steven Van den Broek (Cefic) Mr Tony Musu (ETUC) Mr Jonathan Crozier (Cefic) Ms Brigitte Dero (VinylPlus) Mr Jan-Philipp Kramer (Prognos) Mr Janosch Nellen (Prognos) Ms Maria Estela Isquierdo (EUPC) Ms Florence Lumen (IMA Europe)	
<i>European Institutions</i>	
Ms Isabelle Laurent (DG EMPL) Mr Alick Morris (DG EMPL) Ms Brenda O'Brian (EU OSHA)	