



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Governance  
**Social dialogue**

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

### **Working Group Meeting Competitiveness, Employment and Industrial Policy**

**Meeting 22 February 2018**

#### **Minutes**

Chairs: Koen LAENENS (ECEG) and Alfons DE POTTER (industriAll Europe)

#### **1. Opening and approval of the draft agenda**

The draft agenda was approved with the addition of one point on due diligence under point 7.

#### **2. Launch of EU-project on innovation and digital transformation**

Silke Voigt (SV) presented (see [annex](#)) an overview of the newly granted project on digitalisation which is a follow-up to the Roadmap project and the joint statement on digitalisation signed in 2016. The main objective of the project is to demonstrate the added value of sectoral social dialogue in working towards shaping the impact of innovation and digital transformation processes by raising awareness and exchanging good practices. The project will start with a European-wide survey and SV called for support to ensure a massive participation to the survey, including from SMEs.

#### **3. Exchange on national good practices on employability and ageing workers**

##### **a) Finland**

Jaana Neuvonen and Taru Reinikainen presented (see [annex](#)) the joint programme “Good Tomorrow” which was agreed between social partners in 2009 to promote well-being and productivity at work in the chemical industry. The programme started with the implementation of 30 projects at company level aiming at sharing best practices and the production of an early intervention guide. Next steps are: (1) the organisation of a companies’ visit tour (to strengthen communication; gather information on companies development needs; promote materials and tools); and (2) generate stronger companies’ commitment by gathering indicators on well-being at work.

## **b) Belgium**

Koen Laenens and Lieveke Norga presented a collective bargaining agreement which set up a Demography Fund whose aim is to ensure the sustainability of employment in the chemical sector. The fund serves to finance action plans (with new measures) proposed by companies. Measures must fall in the following four categories: work (compulsory); health; skills; career management. You may find examples of such measures in the presentation in [annex](#).

## **4. Update on European Pillar of Social Rights**

Isabelle Laurent (IL) provided a brief update on the state of play of the initiatives related to the European Pillar of Social Rights (Work-life balance; Access to social protection; Transparent and predictable working conditions) and the new initiatives for the creation of a European Labour Authority and a European Social Security Number. Trade unions expressed their satisfaction with the 20 principles whilst employers, although supporting the principles, expressed concerns about the respect of the subsidiarity principle. Social partners are calling for the possibility to discuss the proposed Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions with a Commission representative at the next working group meeting.

## **5. European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy**

Hugo Schally (HS) presented (see [annex](#)) the recent [European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy](#) and the results of the public consultation which notably shows that many citizens are worried about the impact of plastics on health and on the environment. The strategy focuses on making all plastic packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030; acting on single use plastics; and calling for global action. The starting point is to ask companies for voluntary commitments to use recycled material (what they want to achieve; how and to which extent) and assess whether the impact would be sufficient. HS also pointed to the [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) where one can exchange and interact on the circular economy.

Geoffroy Thillieux (VinylPlus) presented (see [annex](#)) the four strands of work defined since the signature of the cooperation agreement between the social partners of the European Chemical SSDC and VinylPlus: Health and safety; Education/training; Knowledge transfer; Sector evolution. The first project will cover Health and Safety and look at the potential added value/impact on the PVC industry of the current proposal amending Dir. 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work. A comprehensive workshop gathering all partners will be organised end May and a brochure with a detailed overview of health and safety aspects in the plastics recycling sector will be produced.

## **6. Revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive**

Tony Musu provided (see [annex](#)) a state of play of the revision of the CMD. Starting from 3 carcinogens with binding OELs, a first batch of 13 was added in 2016, a second batch of 5 in 2017 and a third batch of 5 (including formaldehyde) is expected by end 2018. Trade Unions have suggested the inclusion of diesel in the second batch and this was proposed as an amendment in the European Parliament Rapporteur's report in November. The trilogue for the second batch is foreseen in the second quarter of 2018.

On possible future reviews of the CMD and potential consultation of social partners, ETUC considers that a methodology for selecting the substance would be necessary and that there

is no will to negotiate between social partners. The latter because these topics are very technical and the European Parliament and Member States must be involved.

Steven van de Broeck (Cefic) expanded on the willingness of the EP to extend to reprotoxic substances in the scope of revisions and suggested that it would be important to come to a joint position on this issue. Emma Argutyán confirmed that ECEG is in favour of integrating reprotoxic substances. Sylvain Lefebvre concluded by emphasizing the need to provide information on those legal texts to the workers.

## 7. Any other business – Due diligence

Sylvain Lefebvre raised the attention to a recent [OECD forum](#) on due diligence which took place in Paris and proposed to look more closely into this topic within the SSDC Chemicals.

### Annexes:

Agenda item 2: EU-project on innovation and digital transformation

Agenda item 3: Finland

Agenda item 3: Belgium

Agenda item 5: European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy (DG ENV)

Agenda item 5: VinylPlus

Agenda item 6: Revision of the Carcinogen and Mutagens Directive - ETUC

### Participants 22/02/2018:

<u>Employers</u> Mr Koen Laenens (BE) Ms Emma Argutyán-Kahlmeyer (EU) Ms Silke Voigt (EU) Mr Paolo Cuneo (IT) Ms Katharina Göbel (DE) Ms Jaana Neuvonen (FI) Mr Ladislav Spacek (CZ) Mr Luc Wangen (FR)	<u>Workers</u> Mr Sylvain Lefebvre (EU) Ms Myra Rednoss (EU) Ms Gertraud Lauber (DE) Mr Anthony Devlin (UK) Ms Lieveke Norga (BE) Mr Taru Reinikainen (FI) Mr Alberto Simoes (PT) Mr Tamas Székely (HU) Mr Massimo Zuffi (IT) Ms Isabel Tomas (SP) Mr Thierry Gontier (FR)
<i>External speakers</i>	
Ms Brigitte Dero (VinylPlus) Mr Geoffroy Tillieux (EUPC) Ms Maria Estela Isquierdo (EUPC) Mr Steven Van den Broek (Cefic)	
<i>European Commission</i>	
Ms Isabelle Laurent (DG EMPL) Mr Hugo Schally (DG ENV)	