



Project VS/2015/0033

European Chemical Industry Social Partners

ROADMAP 2015-2020

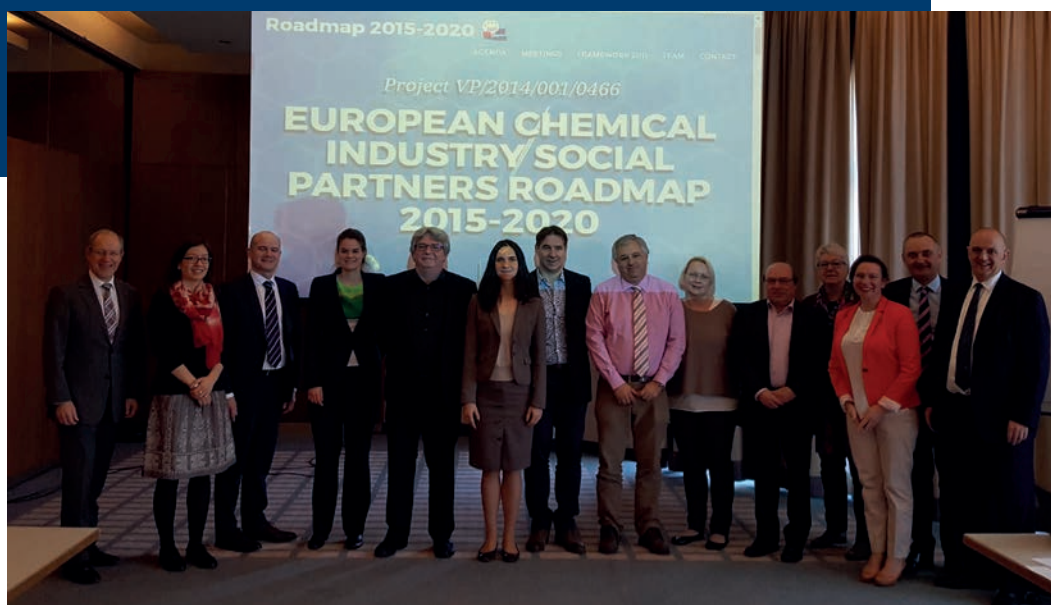
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Preface

With the project “European Chemical Industry Social Partners Roadmap 2015-2020”, industriAll European Trade Union and the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG) stepped up their commitment to social dialogue and fostered the implementation of European social dialogue outcomes. This brochure intends to visualise the concrete results of nearly 3 years of intense work of both social partners and their affiliates at national level in the European chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industries.

The European chemical industry¹ directly employs more than 3.3 million people and is the 2nd largest industry in Europe after the automotive sector. 94,000 enterprises generate a turnover of €1078 billion in the EU28 producing a record trade surplus of €129 billion (Eurostat 2014 figures). The sector is composed of large multinational companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); over 90% of the chemical companies have less than 250 employees.

Against this background, European sectoral social dialogue was initiated in 2002 after the creation of the European Chemical Employers Group. EMCEF (European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers’ Federation) and the ECEG then aimed to make use of the possibilities offered by the European Treaties and utilise this formalised dialogue in the interest of both the chemical industry and its workforce to foster development initiatives for the European chemical sector.

In May 2015, the scope of the sectoral social dialogue committee was officially enlarged and confirmed by the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, and European Commissioner for the Euro and Social Dialogue as well as Vice-President of the European Commission, Valdis Dombrovskis. The ECEG and industriAll Europe are today the recognised European social partners for the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber and plastics industries (NACE 20, 21 and 22).

In the same spirit, we will further strengthen our cooperation in the context of our joint work programme “Roadmap 2015-2020”:

In January 2018, both social partners will launch their new EU-funded project on “the impact of digital transformation and innovation on the workplace: a sector-specific study of the European chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industry in Europe”.

Ongoing project activities have strengthened this social dialogue and both partners look forward to further collaboration based on mutual trust and commitment.

1. Henceforth refers to the chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastic industries.

Meetings



Steering Group 1

18-19/02/2015

Brussels

Steering Group 2

29/04/2015

Brussels

Steering Group 3

4-5/06/2015

Budapest

Evaluation Meeting 1

16/02/2016

Brussels

Steering Group 4

15/09/2016

Rome

Steering Group 5

14/01/2017

Brussels

Steering Group 6

15-16/03/2017

Prague

Evaluation Meeting 2

19/10/2017

Berlin

Evaluation Meeting 3

23-24/11/2017

Paris



Conferences

Conference 1 and plenary meeting 13-14/10/2015 – Helsinki

The first project conference was an illustration of the work carried out by the social partners. Moreover, it was a good opportunity to belatedly celebrate the 10th anniversary of social dialogue in the chemical sector. The conference brought together not only the members of the respective organisations but also the former leadership from both sides. It presented a stage to examine social dialogue from the beginning to the present stage. The title of the conference “From Helsinki to Helsinki” had a symbolic meaning: the first joint social partner meeting took place in this very city more than a decade ago.

The venue was equally symbolic: the delegates were hosted by the European Chemicals Agency, namely the Executive Director, Geert Dancet.

In his opening speech Mr. Dancet acknowledged the social partners’ active cooperation with the ECHA’s activities, more specifically REACH, and discussed the role and place of social partners in making REACH legislation more accessible to SMEs and downstream users. The roadmap of actions and its five pillars (industrial relations and competitiveness, health and safety, employment, education and lifelong learning and the Framework Agreement on Competence Profiles) were officially launched and signed off by the social partners.



Final Conference 13-14/06/2017 – Brussels

The final conference in Brussels presented the two-year findings and outcomes of the project. The social partners were greeted by the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, and the Member of the European Parliament, Jutta Steinruck.

Delegates had a chance to exchange on topics such as:

- Demographic change and well-being at work
- A sustainable future and employment for the manufacturing industry in Europe
- Next generation work and the impact of digitalisation
- Active ageing and an inter-generational approach

The Roadmap results were well summarised at the two round table discussions on 'Sustainable employment in the chemical industry' and 'the future of manufacturing industry: the impact of innovation and digital transformation'



"The joint document that you have endorsed today is built on what you have achieved together over the past 13 years. The focus of your joint work could not be any more relevant: globalisation, digitalisation and demographic ageing are profoundly changing your sector. I am convinced that trusted social partnership at all levels will help us to better face the challenges ahead. The priorities you have put forward for your ambitious work will indeed be crucial in terms of strengthening our social market economy. The chemical industry is a major asset for the European economy. I am confident that your sector faces a bright future, to 2020 and beyond", affirmed Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility.



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Outcomes

Four significant documents on 10 years of sectoral social dialogue, competence profiles, digitalisation and sustainable employment were concluded in the framework of the Roadmap project. These documents are testament to the regular meetings, strong commitment and trustful cooperation of the steering group members from both associations throughout the project's life cycle.

Ten years of Sectoral Social Dialogue in the European Chemical Industry

In October 2015, the European social partners of the chemical industry published a report looking at 10 years of sectoral social dialogue committee entitled "From Helsinki to Helsinki - Ten years of Sectoral Social Dialogue in the European Chemical Industry - Achievements and Lessons learned".

The informative report recalls past achievements on topics such as:

- Responsible Care
- Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)
- Education, vocational education and training, lifelong learning
- Sustainability agenda
- Occupational pensions
- Energy policy and climate change

In the context of the new start for Social Dialogue announced by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at a high-level conference on 5 March 2015, both social partners concluded to direct their efforts towards better dissemination of their activities, especially at national level.

"There are three important pillars for successful social dialogue: trust among social partners, competence and leadership."

Michael Vassiliadis



Addendum to the Framework Agreement on Competence Profiles for Operators and First Line Supervisors in the Chemical Industry

Social partners' joint work in enabling employees to be more mobile within Europe, to bring labour markets closer together, to strengthen employability and to reduce regional mismatches within the EU highlighted that the common education and vocational training frameworks are a necessity. This also entailed joint work in attracting young talent to the sector, thereby reducing youth unemployment. Social partners' cooperation also contributed to the development of safer, well paid and good quality jobs in Europe while ensuring the competitiveness of the European chemical industry.

In this context, the "Framework Agreement on Competence Profiles for Operators and First Line Supervisors in the Chemical Industry" was signed on 15 April 2011. After several years of dissemination efforts both at European and national levels, the agreement was evaluated in 2012 and 2015. Results showed that in those countries where social dialogue is well developed, the agreement had been widely disseminated, that it had no major impact on competence profiles in big undertakings but that it could be put to better use in SMEs.

Despite success in Central and Eastern Europe, better dissemination is still needed in some countries and developing additional profiles could be envisaged.

During the first Roadmap project conference in Helsinki, the addendum to the framework agreement was signed on 14 October 2015. Major aspects included: additional dissemination efforts, specific focus on SMEs, updates of existing profiles and development of additional profiles, if necessary, and regular monitoring and general evaluation by 2020.



"The European competence profiles for Operators and First Line Supervisors have influenced the discussion in Finland on skills development, especially in SMEs."
Jaana Neuvonen

Joint position on social and employment-related aspects of digitalisation

Throughout 2016, the European Sectoral Social Partners in the chemical industry negotiated the joint position on social and employment-related aspects of digitalisation. The document was signed at the annual plenary meeting on 22 November 2016.

The joint position set out three main priorities:

- A well-skilled workforce in the chemical industry is key to the sector's economic and social performance
- Inclusion of European Sectoral Social Partners in the digital transformation process
- Promotion of competitiveness, job growth and sound working conditions for the European chemical industry

For the full list of actions undertaken by the social partners, please consult the websites of both European associations.

The majority of the action plan described in the joint position will be put in place in the framework of the upcoming EU-funded project VS/2017/0358 entitled "The impact of digital transformation and innovation in the workplace: a sector-specific study of the European chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industry in Europe". It will address and anticipate sectoral challenges in these industries.

"Social partnership is one key element for designing a sustainable future of the chemical industry in Europe."

Dr. Jochen Wilkens



The European Framework of Action on Sustainable Employment and Career Development and its Toolbox on Good Practices

The framework of action aims to

- Defend the competitiveness of the European chemical sector and companies and promote sustainable development
- Promote the attractiveness of the sector and encourage a diverse workforce
- Elaborate on young workers, female workers, older workers and demographic change
- Anticipate, prepare and manage change and employability across our sector
- Support measures for career development and voluntary professional mobility within the sector
- Promote safe and healthy workplaces and well-being of all workers

Means

Social Partners of the chemical industry aim to raise awareness, exchange good practices and facilitate information exchange among our members.

Hence, major activities are planned around publication and dissemination, further discussions and reporting within the SSDC. The sector-specific toolbox on good practices offers, both to our members and interested third parties, the opportunity to choose the most relevant tools based on their specific needs and demands at sectoral, national and company levels. Promoting success stories and practical means among our members, such as skills assessments and professional career guidance, would, in addition, increase the attractiveness of the sector.



"Sustainable employment is key to competitiveness and growth in the chemical industry."

Yves Verschueren



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Moreover, this exchange could lead to new initiatives and projects among our members at sectoral, national and/or company levels. It could also establish the first step towards a more formalised sustainability network among social partners in the sector.

The document provides a list of recommendations for how to:

- Promote sustainability as part of our shared responsibility for the future of the European chemical industry
- Encourage age management policies and promote a diverse workforce
- Promote training and lifelong learning
- Stimulate vocational education and training
- Develop work-life balance policies
- Career development of older workers and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) measures
- Recognise and validate acquired competence
- Health and well-being at work



"The conferences were an excellent example of effective social dialogue over the last ten years and bore testament to the renewed commitment towards future competitiveness and job growth in the European Chemical Industry."
Luc Triangle



The Road Ahead

The work programme 2018 – 2020 of the European social partners in the chemical industry will be agreed and signed off by the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG) and industriAll European Trade Union (industriAll Europe) at the plenary meeting of the Sector Social Dialogue Committee of the Chemical Industry on 8 December 2017. It is to be linked to the Social Partners Roadmap 2015-2020.

A major focus will lie on the upcoming EU-funded project VS/2017/0358 entitled “The impact of digital transformation and innovation in the workplace: a sector-specific study of the European chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industry in Europe”. The project will address and anticipate sectoral challenges including chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industries. Based on a research study, both social partners will assess its results and jointly negotiate an action plan.



“The active capacity building within social partner organisations and strong personal relationships will stimulate the future of our sectoral social dialogue.”

Emma Argutyan



“The joint work of the last years has improved workers conditions in the chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industry in Europe and I am positive that this will improve even further in the years to come!”

Sylvain Lefebvre

In the context of occupational health and safety, European social partners in the chemical industry intend to implement the Memorandum of Understanding on Responsible Care between the Social Partners and CEFIC, and exchange on imported chemical substances, carcinogens and mutagens as well as endocrine disruptors.

In the field of employment, the European Pillar of Social Rights will continue to set the agenda. Social partners intend to work on a joint paper on female workforce in the chemical industry. Together with the European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries (FECCIA), we will manage the mentoring mobility portal, a result of the project on youth mobility and mentoring, VS/2015/0348.

Other topics include social partner involvement in the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, dissemination of the framework agreement on competence profiles and cooperation with trade associations on circular economy and recycling.



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For questions regarding the activities of the European social partners in the chemical industry, please contact the respective European secretariat:



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