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Cooperation agreement

of the European Chemical Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee and VinylPlus on the European PVC Industry

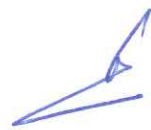

The industry associations ECVM, ECPI and ESPA on the one hand and EMCEF on the other hand agreed in 2000 to a social dialogue on important issues for all involved partners, as part of the Vinyl 2010 programme.

As part of the 2015 VinylPlus¹ revision and following the formal enlargement of the scope of the European Chemical Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC) in 2015 to include, among others the plastics sector as well, VinylPlus, in charge of implementing the voluntary programme of the European PVC industry, and ECEG² / IndustriAll Europe³, together representing the European Chemical SSDC, have agreed to intensify their cooperation. This cooperation agreement on the European PVC Industry defines areas and subjects of joint activities of all three parties within this intensified cooperation for the period of 2017-2020 (3 years) (with an annual evaluation of the cooperation at the Plenary of the SSDC).

These areas and subjects will be fully linked to the European Chemical Industry Sectoral Social Partners' 2015-2020 Roadmap and will focus on the following priorities:

- Health & Safety
- Education / training
- Knowledge transfer
- Sector evolution
- Objectives
- Agenda
- Expected results

The European Chemical Social Partners will actively engage with key stakeholders in order to pave the way towards a sustainable future as mentioned above and based on efficient use of resources and sound waste management.

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Development of the PVC industry in Europe

The regular meetings of the European SSDC of the Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Rubber and Plastics Industries cover views on the EU legislative developments affecting the sectors concerned, including the PVC industry in Europe. Together with experts from VinylPlus, ECEG and IndustriAll Europe will intensify their exchange on the issues at stake and the progress on decided actions and subsequent decisions to be taken in the SSDC with regard to the European PVC industry.

Health and safety and environmental standards

In the EU, the production, use and recycling of PVC applications and their raw materials are governed by the respect of high safety and environmental standards. These high standards guarantee a safe production and use of PVC applications. Such high standards require continuous research and implementation of new scientific findings and a clear focus on health and safety as well as environmental issues. At company level, appropriate and comprehensive information and training of the workforce are an important precondition for handling PVC and its raw materials safely.

The SSDC will together with VinylPlus discuss PVC R&D programmes and findings, with the objective to improve dissemination of information and training programmes in order to manage risk exposures safely.

One envisaged action is to discuss with the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI⁴) the possibility of launching a study on industrial changes in the converting sector and/or in the recycling sector, which could deal with sectoral policy developments, evolution of R&D, innovation, digitalisation in the sector and the requested competencies.

Specific focus on recycling facilities

One needs to take into account that most recyclers are SMEs and only a small part of the recyclers (10-20 %) use SDS-R⁵ today. EuPC*/EuPR⁶ have already taken some actions to substantially increase this figure. To support these activities in Europe the SSDC together with VinylPlus will work on implementing this project with the following objectives:

- preparation of a brochure providing a detailed overview of health and safety aspects in the plastics recycling sector, in order to make sure that the workers' protection is continuously ensured in the different steps of the recycling process. This brochure should be made available in several languages (minimum EN, FR, DE, ES and IT)
- organisation of workshops in several EU Member States with the objectives to cover large parts of the European plastics recycling sector to disseminate the findings and information.

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Training and Lifelong Learning

High technological standards as well as a qualified, competent and motivated workforce are prerequisites for high environmental, health and safety standards in the PVC industry.

A high level of continuous training (throughout the working life) is essential for employment security within the PVC industry and also for the creation of employment opportunities in allied industries. The SSDC together with VinylPlus will discuss the need to develop further specific training geared to the needs of the PVC industry. A particular attention will be paid to digital transformation and the development of job content in this respect.

The objective will be to facilitate the implementation of high-level standards in all EU Member States, taking into account their specific situations and traditions.

Brussels, 24 February 2017

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*This commitment to intensify cooperation has been agreed by VinylPlus on behalf of ECVM, ESPA and European Plasticisers (former ECPI). Its fourth member, EuPC, will be involved at a later stage.

¹ VinylPlus is the voluntary sustainable development programme of the European PVC industry.

² ECEG: The European Chemical Employers Group is the European employers' organisation representing the interests of the chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industries at the European level.

³ IndustriAll Europe: IndustriAll European Trade Union represents workers across supply chains in manufacturing, mining and energy sectors across Europe.

⁴ CCMI: Commission Consultative des Mutations Industrielles - Consultative Commission on Industrial Change.

⁵ SDS-R: Safety Data-Sheet – Recycling

⁶ EuPC: European Plastics Converters; EuPR: European Plastics Recyclers