



2ND
WORKSHOP

SUMMARY

On the Road to Climate Neutrality 2050

European Chemical Social Partners' Workshop

14 & 15 June 2022 - Zagreb, Croatia



Background and aim of the workshop

For project background and scenarios developed during the first workshop, please see summary of Workshop 1. The aim of the second workshop was to discuss the impact of transition towards carbon neutrality on companies and workers and to identify the role of social partners in the process.

Roundtable and Presentations by the participants, discussion

Participants shared ideas and suggested actions regarding health and safety, employment, skills, etc., at company/regional/national and European levels, considering the introduction of newly developed technology, circular approaches, etc. (Figure 1)

Investment and support:

enhancing investments and development of green production, feedstock and processes; promotion of industrial clusters; investment in R&D, funding and support needed (by governments, especially for SMEs); simplification of application procedures for financial support; remodelling of plants.

Competitiveness and dependencies:

preservation of competitiveness; US/China vs. Europe: risk of competition has to be considered in European legislation; energy supply and dependencies (e.g. on Russia); self-sufficiency and dependencies in supply chain to be considered; after a long period of ongoing globalisation, new nationalisation tendencies emerge.

Cooperation and synergies:

development of national and regional plans; use of synergies within and outside of companies; cross-sectoral approach and partnerships; cooperation between governments, companies and social partners; better cooperation between works councils and trade unions (where applicable, depending on the respective national systems of industrial relations); creation and support of (regional) networks.

Social Partner involvement:

lobbying with clear/simple messages; regular (tripartite) exchange; involvement of social partners in industrial policy development; participative and constructive dialogue; long-term strategy (mapping of skills needs for companies and creating a database to identify needs and related solutions); opportunities for social partners to discuss potential routes for decarbonisation at site and group levels.

Working conditions:

no one left behind/Just Transition considering social aspects; clear and in advance information sharing with workers; no income loss; sustainable working conditions; maximum level of health and safety standards.

Employment:

preserve employment; promote inclusivity; anticipation of demographic change (consider requesting an immigration strategy); need to improve public opinion and the image of the industries (recruitment and attractiveness of the sector); creation of stable/non-precarious jobs, 'green jobs' (definition needed).

Skills and training:

investment in education and training; definition of skills required for 'green jobs'; definition of new competence profiles for changing jobs (to match industry's needs); qualification for new technologies considering mental load for employees when adapting to new skills; include information on regulatory compliance into curricula; qualification of works councils and trade union representatives to equip them with the knowledge needed to cooperate with management in the anticipation and management of change.

Figure 1.



Presentation of wmp/Syndex research results 'Fields of action for companies and impact on employment, working conditions, skills'

Please see presentation.

Presentation by Marko Sušnik (SME United): 'The impact on SMEs'

Please see presentation.

Questions & Answers:

- Organisation of VET and upskilling/reskilling - very different structures in the Member States. Good examples of the Austrian dual system with teachers also working in companies, upskilling mainly organised by industry associations.
- Opportunities for SMEs are, for example, green tech innovation and safe and sustainable by design products.

How to ensure a just and successful transition?

Participants collected and discussed concrete objectives regarding policy demands (including investments and support), employment (quality jobs, recruitment of skilled workforce,

etc.), working conditions (including health & safety) and skills and training, as well as actions that social partners should take at company, sectoral, national, and European levels (Figure 2).



Figure 2.

Policy demands

- **Legislation** (to be updated/adjusted, e.g. in the areas of waste, circular economy, hydrogen, protection of the European market);
- **Strategy** (combined employers'-trade union agenda; harmonised action plans and transition pathways; local and national framework agreements, including guiding principles; consider countries acceding to the EU; support front-runners to accelerate transition);
- **Investment** (co-financed by governments and companies; investment proposals by trade unions and works councils; lobbying for funds; fair distribution of political incentives for investments);
- **Adapting training and education** (vocational schools/dual education system; lifelong learning; training of existing and new workforce; incentives and tailor-made training for people from other sectors or currently not in employment; (faster) adaptation of training courses; create EU policy for STEM education and transfer to national level).

Employment

- **Recruitment and securing skilled workforce** (campaigning; long-term education strategy to retain skilled workforce; gender and diversity in recruitment);
- **Information, data and foresight** (solid data on possible developments in employment; alternative pathways for employees; sharing experiences with SMEs);
- **Examples:** Chemie³, materials/campaign: Wir gestalten Zukunft VCI, framework agreement UNITE, chemistry and society forum in Spain involving academia and social partners.

Communication

- Communication along the value chain and with consumers on potentially increasing prices that come with higher energy prices and new production processes;
- Communication and public relations by social partners, be more vocal and strategic in presenting the chemical sector as a solution and not a problem;
- Explain climate neutrality goals to employees.

Working conditions

- **Workers' involvement and information** (environmental coordinators; awareness; management and workers should together develop plans to make their companies sustainable; meaningful ongoing consultations; clarification of technological developments; need for glossary with clear explanations of climate policy legislation, including definitions of, e.g., carbon neutrality and climate neutrality);
- **Framework conditions and legislation** (prevention of temporary agency work; direct employment, no zero-hour contracts; promote collective bargaining; be mindful of newly emerging risks in occupational safety and health stemming from new technologies, materials or substances used in production processes: work with regulators to fully understand and manage these risks, EU OSHA has started with a number of foresight studies);
- **Health & safety** (consider well-being, stress and psychosocial risks stemming from uncertain future and pressure to adapt; develop policies at the workplace; material currently developed by Unite; need for statistical evidence)
- **Working conditions in supply chain** (e.g. import of raw materials).

Skills and training

- **Identification and mapping of existing skills and needs** (regularly discuss skills at European level; application for the Blueprint initiative by the European social partners to identify future green, digital and sustainable skills; resources/qualifications; future roles, what training/upskilling do current employees need?);
- **Exchange and cooperation** (national/regional/EU centres of competence (schools, academia, companies...));
- **Education** (engage with educational institutions and relevant authorities to adapt curricula where necessary; burden sharing: more companies to offer apprenticeships or financially contribute to apprenticeships offered by others).

Summary, Outlook and Feedback

The aim of the project is to collect and present concrete examples and tools. Participants, as well as others, are invited to share further examples of engagement and cooperation. Examples from this workshop will be considered and, where possible, further developed in the next workshop.

The **next workshop** will take place in Hungary (Budapest) on **26 and 27 October 2022**. The **final conference** will take place on **7 and 8 March 2023**.