



Social Dialogue on REACH and Health and Safety

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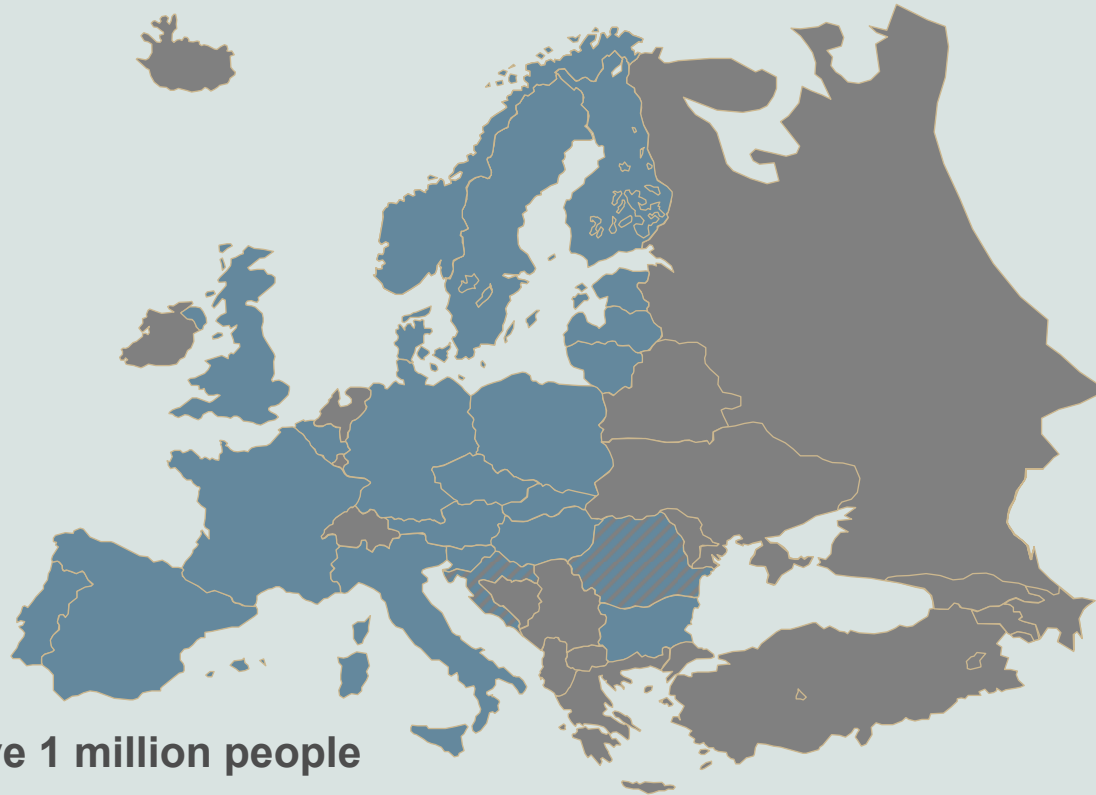
ETUC Conference on REACH

19th September 2006, Brussels

European Chemical Employers Group - ECEG

Overview

- 23 member federations
- founded as federation in January 2002 (but long history of multilateral network)
- Independent federation for Social Affairs, linked to the „Cefic-family“ of associations representing the European Chemical industry in many areas
- Represents with its member federations more than 10,000 companies in 23 countries employing far above 1 million people
- Members are national federations of the Chemical Industry, dealing with social affairs, collective bargaining and employment relations



Social Dialogue of the Chemical Industry

History

- **Period of confidence building until 2004**
 - Organisation of annual European Social Partner Conferences of the Chemical Industry since March 2001
 - Creation of ECEG as an autonomous group linked to CEFIC in order to enable the industry to lead a sector-specific Social Dialogue in January 2002
 - Joint declarations of ECEG and EMCEF on:
 - Responsible Care (Health, Safety, Environment) – in May 2003 together with Cefic
 - Chemicals Policy (REACH) – in November 2003 together with Cefic
 - Education, Training and Lifelong Learning – in September 2004
- **Joint request of ECEG and EMCEF to the European Commission to start a Sector Social Dialogue Committee in October 2004**
- **Inauguration of the Social Dialogue in December 2004**

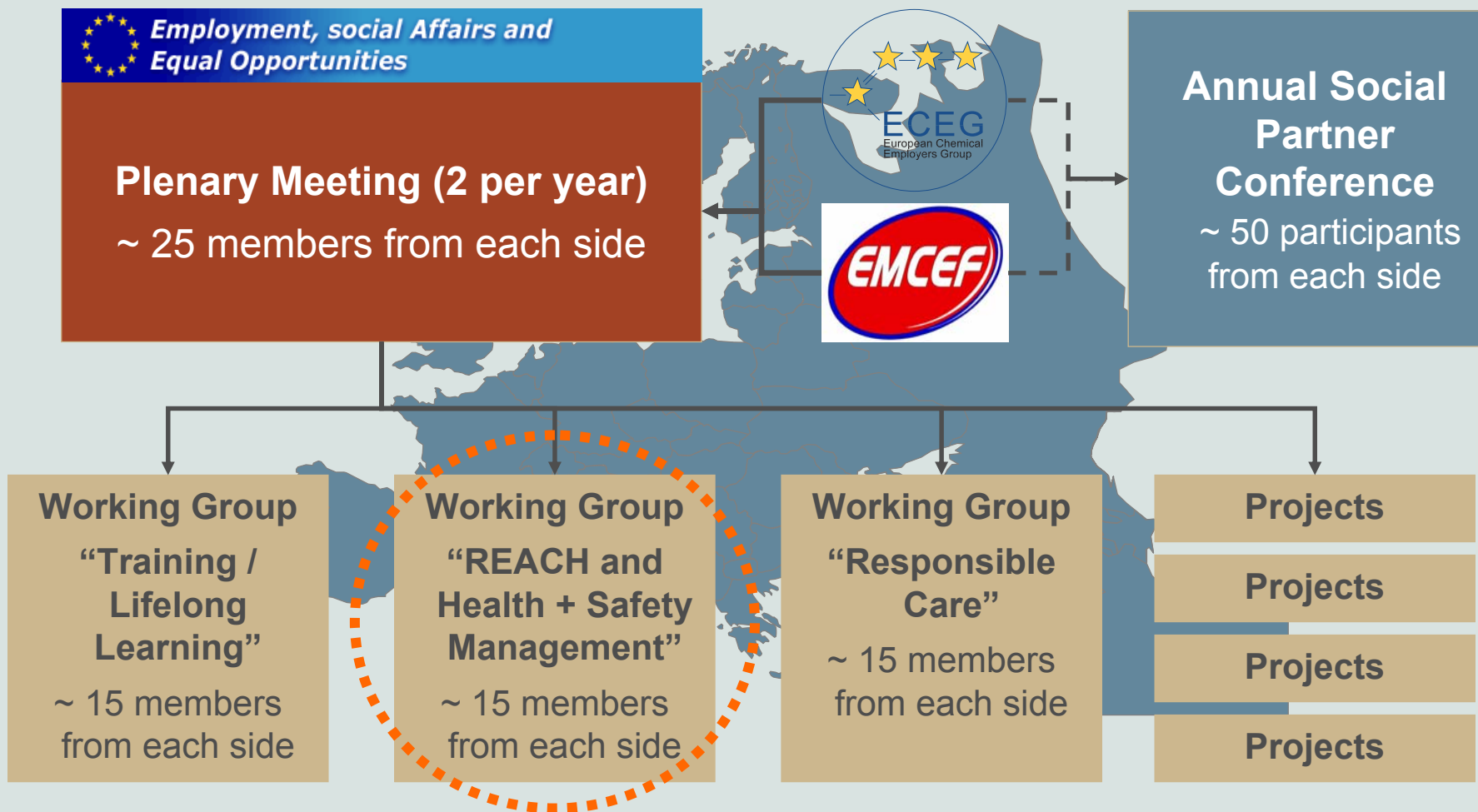
Social Dialogue of the Chemical Industry

Principles

- **Subjects discussed in the Social Dialogue are on an equal basis**
 - “business issues” (like industrial policy, REACH, etc.) and
 - “social issues” (like training, lifelong learning, health and safety, etc.)
- **Autonomy of the Social Partners**
- **Only „European items“ and those of common interest to both Social Partners will be part of the Working Programme**
- **No interference with national collective bargaining**
 - The European Social Dialogue is no new, additional layer of collective bargaining, its aim is to deal with European issues of importance for the industry and its employees
- **Any agreement in the European Social Dialogue will not lead to direct obligations for the companies or the employees**
 - This is the job of the national Social Partners

Social Dialogue of the Chemical Industry

Structure 2005 / 2006



Social Dialogue of the Chemical Industry

Working Programme 2005 / 2006

- **Education, Training and Lifelong Learning**

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- **Responsible Care**

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- **REACH and Health and Safety**

- Drafting joint position papers to influence discussion and decision
 - Promote safe handling of chemicals in „downstream-user“ industries; exchange of experience with their Social Partners
 - Continue „Awareness-Rising“
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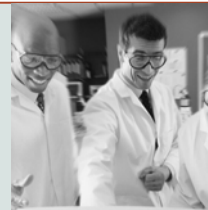
- **Follow-up EU Enlargement 2004 and preparation of next phase of enlargement**



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Work on REACH and Health and Safety (1)

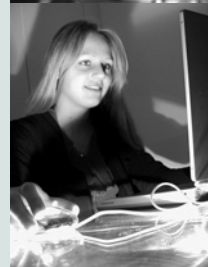
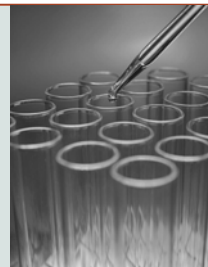
- **On April 5th 2005 first meeting of the Social Dialogue Working Group on REACH and Health and Safety**
- **Since then the Working Group has met five more times on**
 - 2nd June 2005, 9th September 2005, 20th February 2006, 10th July 2006 and 1st September 2006
- **Plenary Meetings of the Social Dialogue on**
 - 15th September 2005 and 3rd May 2006 and
- **the Social Partner Conference of the EU Chemical Industry on**
 - 16th September 2005
- **discussed the progress of the Working Group**



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Work on REACH and Health and Safety (2)

- **Joint ECEG – EMCEF (- Cefic) position paper had been agreed already back in 2003**
- **First project of the Working Group was a new, updated joint position paper for final phase of 1st reading in European Parliament and Council**
 - Adopted by the Working Group in June 2005 and the Plenary Meeting in September 2005
 - Further to describing the position of the Social Partners on REACH the paper defines certain areas, in which the Social Partners will act together in order to realise improvements for the industry and its employees



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REACH Position Paper of EMCEF, ECEG and Cefic from November 2003

- „The new system should not create unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and disproportionate obstacles affecting the product ranges and the supply chain of chemicals“
 - „The system must prioritise the required tasks and chemicals of lesser risk and concern (...) should be exempted“
 - „... ECEG, Cefic and EMCEF consider that the Chemical Policy Review is unlikely to further reduce chemically induced occupational diseases within the chemical manufacturing industry as it is already well regulated in this area and employees in the sector are adequately protected as the results demonstrate due to the good practices developed between authorities, industry and employees.“
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- *full text > http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/sectoral_en.htm*

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REACH Position Paper of EMCEF and ECEG (/Cefic) from June 2005

- „Disproportionate requirements for low volume substances will have considerable impact (...) in particular on SMEs which will be seriously hit.“
 - „ ... overall management responsibility shall be assigned to the Central Agency to ensure level playing field across Europe.“
 - „ ... confidentiality of business information has to be guaranteed and participation to consortia must remain on a voluntary basis.“
 - „Restriction and authorisation of substances should (...) avoid unproductive re-engineering and reformulation efforts.“
 - „Apart from positive results REACH might have on the one or the other aspect, the negative impacts highlighted in the impact assessments clearly show that there is a need to improve the REACH proposal.“
- *full text > http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/sectoral_en.htm*

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Work on REACH and Health and Safety (3)

- **Two Conferences on REACH and Health and Safety have been organised by EMCEF and ECEG for national Social Partners with support of the EU Commission on**
 - 23 / 24 March 2006 in Prague for the countries who joined the European Union in 2004 with participation from Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
 - 29 / 30 May 2006 in Bucharest for candidate countries with participation from Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Croatia
 - Both events showed
 - A high level of uncertainty and fear among both companies and employees in these countries about REACH
 - Special problems faced by the Chemical Industry in these countries because their very high number of SMEs in the sector which still fear to be simply driven out of the market

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Work on REACH and Health and Safety (4)

- **Next project of the Working Group is planned cooperation with downstream user industries and their Social Partners**
 - Main aim is the distribution of the knowledge within the Chemical Industry on 'good practice' in handling chemical substances towards downstream user industries and its employees
 - Several already existing examples in this area have been identified by experts and accepted by the Working Group at its last meeting in September 2006
 - Next possible steps
 - Involve other industries through the social dialogue
 - Get support and validation from the Bilbao Agency

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Improve occupational health and safety in downstream user industries

- **Chemical substances are under attack because of widespread use and exposure by workers in many sectors**
- **Good practice exists in the chemical industry, triggered by**
 - Existing legislation on Occupational Health and Safety
 - Safe use through continuous improvement of processes
 - Continuous training of employees
 - Industry commitment to Product Stewardship as part of Responsible Care
 - Social partner involvement
- **How can this practice be extended to other downstream users and industries?**

Social Dialogue of the Chemical Industry

Improve occupational health and safety in downstream user industries

- **A brochure will be produced to illustrate some examples of good practice from the chemical and related industries**
- **Circulation and possibly training in downstream user industries to be organised**
- **To be used within social dialogue of the Chemical Industry and possibly other sectors as well**
- **Examples selected from downstream users**
 - Vinyl (PVC) industry
 - Diisocyanides and Polyols (ISOPA)
 - Solvents users (focussing on SMEs)
 - Users of crop protection products
 - Formaldehyde

Thank you for your attention

European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG)

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