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Ministerpräsident des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt

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Das Interreg III C Projekt "Europäisches Netzwerk der Chemieregionen" erhält eine finanzielle Unterstützung von der Europäischen Kommission. Die alleinige Verantwortlichkeit für den Inhalt des Dokumentes liegt beim Autor. Die Europäische Kommission ist nicht für den Gebrauch der darin enthaltenen Informationen verantwortlich.

Content

Foreword Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer

Minister President of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt

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Vorwort des Ministerpräsidenten

Der 2. Kongress europäischer Chemieregionen war für Sachsen-Anhalt ein großer Erfolg. Für zwei Tage war Halle der Mittelpunkt der europäischen Chemie: Etwa 250 Vertreter aus rund 20 Regionen versammelten sich in der Saalestadt.



Im Mittelpunkt der Diskussionen stand die künftige Ausgestaltung der europäischen Chemikalienpolitik. In einer engagierten Diskussion mit Umweltkommissarin Margot Wallström wurde deutlich, dass zu diesem Thema noch viele Fragen offen sind. Statt das nur noch für Experten durchschaubare EU-Stoff- und Produktrecht zu vereinfachen, sind neue Bestimmungen geplant. Sie sind einerseits vor allem für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen weder praktikabel noch erfüllbar, andererseits werden sie auch für die Behörden nur schwer kontrollierbar sein. Europa läuft durch die Vorschläge für die Chemikalienverordnung REACH Gefahr, weiter ins Hintertreffen zu geraten.

Auf dem Kongress wurde deutlich, dass es für die Chemieregionen in einer erweiterten Europäischen Union darauf ankommt, neue Initiativen zur Stärkung von Innovations- und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit zu starten. Das gilt nicht zuletzt für die Zusammenarbeit mit den Chemiestandorten in den neuen Mitgliedstaaten. Das Europäische Netzwerk der Chemieregionen, das in den vergangenen Jahren maßgeblich durch das Land Sachsen-Anhalt aufgebaut wurde, kann einen wichtigen Beitrag dazu leisten, die Erfahrungen und Interessen der beteiligten Regionen auf europäischer Ebene einzubringen.

Auf dem Kongress wurde eine gemeinsame Erklärung verabschiedet und mit der Wahl eines Gründungspräsidiums ein wichtiger Schritt zur Verstetigung des Netzwerks getan. Sachsen-Anhalt versteht sich als eine Chemieregion im Herzen Europas. Die Chemieindustrie ist neben der Ernährungswirtschaft der wichtigste Industriebereich. Beschäftigtenzahl und Gesamtumsatz haben sich in den vergangenen Jahren positiv entwickelt.

Daher wird sich das Land auch weiterhin aktiv für die Vernetzung der Chemiestandorte in Europa und für die Verbesserung der Rahmenbedingungen für die Chemieindustrie einsetzen.

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Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer

Ministerpräsident

Preface of the Minister President

The second European Congress of Chemical Regions in Saxony-Anhalt was a big success. For two days, Halle was at the centre of debate about European Chemistry, bringing together more than 250 representatives from 20 regions.

The future shape of European Chemical Policy was the main topic of discussion. In a lively debate with Commissioner for Environment Margot Wallström, it became clear that many questions remain open concerning this topic. Instead of simplifying the present complicated and fragmented EU laws, the proposed regulations are a burden for enterprises and administration. On the one hand the new laws are impractical and too expensive for small and medium-sized enterprises, and on the other they are difficult to control by the authorities. The new regulation REACH does not bode well for the competitive environment of Europe.



It also became apparent during the congress that it is important for the European Union to start new initiatives to strengthen innovation and competitiveness. This is especially the case for the cooperation between chemical regions in the new member states.

The European Network of Chemical Regions, which was set up over the last few years with the support of Saxony-Anhalt, can make an important contribution to integrating the experiences and interests of the participating regions at European level.

A joint declaration was approved during the congress. With the election of a founding presidency, an important step has been made for the further development of the network.

Saxony-Anhalt sees itself as a chemical region at the heart of Europe. Besides the food industry, the chemical industry is the most important economic sector. Both employment and turnover have seen positive developments in the past years.

For this reason, the Land of Saxony-Anhalt will continue to give its active support to the networking of chemical regions in Europe and to the improvement of the framework conditions for the chemical industry in the future.

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Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer
Minister President

Programm des 2. Europäischen Kongresses der Chemieregionen

Program of the 2nd European Congress of Chemical Regions

Programm

Donnerstag, den 5. Februar 2004

8.30 – 09.00 Uhr Registrierung der Teilnehmer

9.00 – 10.30 Uhr Eröffnungssitzung:

Grußwort: Dr. Horst Rehberger, Minister für Wirtschaft und Arbeit des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt

Ingrid Häußler, Oberbürgermeisterin der Stadt Halle

Panel: Moderne Umweltpolitik in Chemieregionen

Moderation: Councillor John Fraser, Vorsitzender des Wirtschaftsausschusses im Regionalrat von Cheshire

- Umweltpolitik in Sachsen-Anhalt - Erreichter Stand und zukünftige Entwicklungen
Petra Wernicke, Ministerin für Landwirtschaft und Umwelt des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt
- Erprobung des REACH Verfahrens in der Praxis – Ergebnisse einer Simulation in Nordrhein-Westfalen
Dr. Andreas Ahrens, Ökopol Hamburg
- Umweltpolitik und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit – Widerspruch oder sinnvolle Ergänzung
Carol Watts, Direktor der North West Chemical Initiative, Cheshire
- Zusammenarbeit zwischen Region und Chemieparken im Bereich der Gefahrenabwehr am Beispiel Kataloniens
Eduard Figuerola, Region Katalonien, Ministerium für Industrie, Handel und Tourismus
- Nachhaltige Entwicklung moderner Chemiestandorte
Dr.-Ing. Christoph Mühlhaus, DOW Olefinverbund GmbH
- Zusammenfassung des Workshops – Aufgaben für das Netzwerk
Maria Teresa Annovazzi, Assessore für Industriepolitik Arbeit und Haushalt, Piemonte

10.30 – 11.00 Uhr K A F F E E P A U S E

11.00 – 12.30 Uhr Die künftige Chemikalienpolitik der Europäischen Union als Herausforderung für die europäischen Chemieregionen

Moderation: Hajo Friedrich, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung – Brüssel

Vorträge mit anschließender Diskussion:

- Margot Wallström, Mitglied der Europäischen Kommission
- Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer, Ministerpräsident des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt,
- John Hontelez, Generalsekretär des Europäischen Umweltbüros
- Dr. Gerd Romanowski, Geschäftsführer und Leiter der Abt. Wissenschaft, Technik und Umwelt im Verband der Chemischen Industrie (VCI), Frankfurt, Hauptgeschäftsführer Verband der Chemischen Industrie e.V.

12.30 – 14.00 Uhr **MITTAGSEMPFANG** der Stadt Halle
Pressekonferenz

14.00 – 16.00 Uhr **Fortsetzung**

Panel: **Chemieregionen als Regionen des Wissens in
einer erweiterten EU**

Moderation: Rudolf Bohn, Staatssekretär im Ministerium für
Wirtschaft und Arbeit des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt

- Zusammenarbeit von Hochschulen und Wirtschaft im Strategiedialog Chemie in Sachsen-Anhalt
Prof. Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, Kultusminister des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt
- Management von Innovationen in Chemieregionen – Das Zentrum für Prozess Innovation
Prof. J. M. Bainbridge, OBE
- Strategien der Chemieregionen für den europäischen Forschungsraum
Dr. Rinaldo Psaro, Research Manager, CNR National Research Council, Region Lombardei
- Zukünftige Herausforderungen für Innovation & Human Resource Development
Jan Dopper, Vorstandsmitglied DSM, Limburg
- Der Produktions- und Wissensverbund im Industriepark Walsrode – Wie entwickelt man einen
Industriepark in einen Chemiepark?
Alf Wilkens, Wolff Walsrode AG, Niedersachsen
- Zusammenfassung des Workshops – Aufgaben für das Netzwerk
Jean Severijns, Provinz Limburg

16.00 – 16.30 Uhr **KAFFEPAUSE**

16.30 – 17.30 Uhr **Generalversammlung des Netzwerks**

Moderation: Magne Haugseng, DICIDA

- Grußwort von Reinhard Reibsch, Generalsekretär der Europäischen Minen-, Chemie- und
Energiearbeitergewerkschaft
- Wahl des Gründungspräsidiums und des Gründungspräsidenten für das Netzwerk europäischer
Chemieregionen
- Aussprache und Verabschiedung des Arbeitsplans für das Netzwerk

ab 19.30 Uhr **ABENDEMPFANG** der Mitteldeutschen
Chemieindustrie

- Grußwort von Dr. Gerwald F. Grahe, Vorsitzender des Landesverbandes Nordost des
Verbandes der Chemischen Industrie e. V.

Freitag, den 6. Februar 2004

9.00 – 11.00 Uhr **Fortsetzung des Kongresses**

Panel: **Regionalpolitik in Chemieregionen in einer erweiterten EU**

Moderation: Dr. Gunthard Bratzke, isw - Institut für Strukturpolitik und Wirtschaftsförderung gGmbH

- **Fallbeispiele für den Einsatz der Strukturfonds für die Umstrukturierung von Chemiestandorten:**
- Steve Duncan, Regionalentwicklungsagentur OneNorthEast
- Antonio Cáceres, Regionalrat von Huelva, Spanien
- Andreas Hiltermann, InfraLeuna GmbH, Sachsen-Anhalt,
- **Handlungsbedarf für den Einsatz der Strukturfonds in den Chemiestandorten in Polen und Tschechien**
- JUDr. Richard Hlavatý, Leiter der Sektion für europäische Integration, Ministerium für Industrie und Handel der Tschechischen Republik,
- Mirosław Lewinski, Abteilungsleiter, Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Sozialpolitik, Abteilung Industriepolitik, Polen
- Kooperationsfelder für die Zukunft
Bogusław Kowalski, Vize Marschall der Wojewodschaft Masowien
- Zusammenfassung des Workshops – Aufgaben für das Netzwerk
Councillor Tony Richmond, Darlington Borough Council

11.00 –11.15 Uhr **Abschlussstatement des (neu) gewählten ECRN Präsidenten**

ab 11.30 – 15.00 Uhr **Ausflüge in die Region (Option)**

Besuch der Chemieparcs in der Region

- P-D ChemiePark Bitterfeld Wolfen
- InfraLeuna GmbH
- Valuepark Dow Olefinverbund GmbH

Agenda

Thursday, 5th of February 2004:

8.30 – 9.00 **Registration of Participants**

9.00 – 10.30 **Opening of the Conference**

Welcome Dr. Horst Rehberger, Minister for Economy and Labour of Saxony-Anhalt

Ingrid Häußler, Mayor of the City of Halle

Panel: Modern environmental policy in Chemical regions

Moderation: Councillor John Fraser, Chair of Cheshire County Council's Economic Development Board, Cheshire County

- Environmental Policy in Saxony-Anhalt - current state of the art and future development
Petra Wernicke, Minister for Agriculture and Environment of Saxony-Anhalt
- Testing REACH in practice – Results of a simulation in Northrhine-Westphalia
Dr. Andreas Ahrens, Ökopol Hamburg
- Environmental policy and Competitiveness – contradiction or essential combination
Carol Watts, Director of the North West Chemical Initiative, Cheshire
- Cooperation of regional and industrial actors on prevention of major-accident hazards
Eduard Figuerola, Generalitat de Catalunya, General Directorate for Industry, Commerce and Tourism
- Sustainable Development in modern chemical sites
Dr.-Ing. Christoph Mühlhaus, DOW Olefinverbund GmbH
- Speech of the Provincial Responsible for Productive Activities; Research and Environment: The Case of Novara
Maria Teresa Annovazzi, Assessore al Bilancio, Province of Novara

10.30 – 11.00 C O F F E E B R E A K

11.00 – 12.30 **The future Chemicals Policy of the European Union as a Challenge for the European Chemical Regions**

Moderation: Hajo Friedrich, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung - Brussels

Statements by:

- Margot Wallström, Member of the European Commission
- Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer, Prime Minister of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt
- John Hontelez, Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau
- Dr. Gerd Romanowski, Managing director and Head of the Department Science, technology and environment of Verband der Chemischen Industrie, Frankfurt

12.30 – 14.00 **LUNCH – RECEPTION of the City of Halle / Press Conference**

14.00 –16.00 **Continuation**

Panel: **Chemical Regions as Knowledge Regions in an enlarged Europe**

Moderation: Rudolf Bohn, Secretary of State, Ministry for Economy and Labour of Saxony-Anhalt

- Co-operation of Universities and Business within the strategy dialogue with the chemical industry in Saxony-Anhalt
Prof. Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, Minister for Science of Saxony-Anhalt
- Management of Innovation in Chemical Regions – The Centre for Process Innovation
Prof. J. M. Bainbridge OBE
- Strategies of Chemical Regions for the European Research Area
Dr. Rinaldo Psaro, Research Manager, CNR National Research Council, Region Lombardia
- Future challenges for Innovation and Human Resource development
Jan Dopper, Member of the Managing Board of DSM, Limburg
- The Production and Knowledge “Verbund” within the Walsrode Industrial Park – how to develop a company site into a chemical industrial park
Alf Wilkens, Wolff Walsrode AG, Lower-Saxony
- Summary – Future Tasks for the European Chemical Regions Network
Jean Severijns, Province of Limburg

16.00 – 16.30 **COFFEE BREAK**

16.30 – 17.30 **General Assembly of the Network**

Moderation: Magne Haugseng, Development Initiative for Chemical Industry Dependent Areas - DICIDA-Network UK

Welcome Address: Reinhard Reibsch, General Secretary of the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation

- Election of ECRN Founding President/Presidium
- Discussion and adoption of Network Programme

19.30 **EVENING RECEPTION of the Central Germany Chemical Industry**

- Welcome by Dr. Gerwald F. Grahe, President of Landesverband Nordost des Verbandes der Chemischen Industrie e.V.

Friday, 6th of February 2004:

9.00 – 11.15 Continuation of the Congress

Panel: Regional Policy in Chemical Regions in an enlarged Europe

Moderation: Dr. Gunthard Bratzke, isw - Institute for Structural Policy and
Economic Promotion gGmbH

- **Examples of the use of structural funds for supporting the restructuring process of chemical sites**
 - Steve Duncan, Regional Development Agency ONE Northeast
 - Antonio Cáceres, Director of the Department for Local Development and Employment of the County Council of Huelva, Spain
 - Andreas Hiltermann, InfraLeuna, Saxony-Anhalt,

- **Challenges for the use of Structural funds in the chemical sites in Poland and the Czech Republic**
 - JUDr. Richard Hlavatý., Head of European Integration, Ministry for Industry and Trade of Czech Republic
 - Miroslaw Lewinski, Deputy Director at the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, Department of Industrial Policy, Poland

 - Possibilities for Co-operation in the future
Boguslaw Kowalski, Vice-Marshall Of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship,

 - Summary of the Workshop - Future Tasks for the network
Councillor Tony Richmond, Darlington Borough Council

11.00 – 11.15 Closure Address of the (newly elected) Network President

from 11.30 – 15.00 Study Visits in the region (optional)

Visit of Chemical Sites in the Region

- P-D ChemiePark Bitterfeld Wolfen
- InfraLeuna GmbH
- Valuepark Dow Olefinverbund GmbH

Zusammenfassung

Summary Report

*Nicola Johnston, Cheshire County Council,
Brusseles Office*

Andreas Fiedler, isw GmbH, Halle

2nd European Congress of Chemical Regions

Halle (Saxony-Anhalt), Germany

5 -6th February 2004

SUMMARY REPORT

Nicola JOHNSTON, Cheshire County Council, Brussels Office

Andreas FIEDLER, isw GmbH, Halle

March 2004

This report presents a summary of the main presentations and discussion developed during the 2nd European Congress of Chemical Regions held in Halle, Germany on 5th and 6th February 2004. Over 260 participants including Commissioners, Ministers, MEPs, EU officials and representatives of science, economics and the regions of Member States, as well as candidate countries, took part in this second Congress.

The Congress was organised in an effort to:

- highlight the benefits of co-operation between chemical regions;
- transfer experience and best practice approaches to the regions in the new Member States;
- discuss the objectives of a cleaner environment, higher innovation capacity, greater competitiveness and the enlargement of the EU in a difficult economic environment and;
- launch the European Chemical Regions Network, discuss the work plan for the next year and elect a founding presidency.



This Congress was particularly timely given that the European Commission had recently brought forward proposals for a Regulation on its new REACH strategy for the chemicals industry.

Opening session

In opening the forum, **Dr Horst REHBERGER**, Minister for Economy and Labour of Saxony-Anhalt, welcomed all participants to the Congress and reiterated the aims of both the network and of this second conference. He stressed that the chemical industry in Europe is facing great changes, not least in view of the enlargement of the European



Union which will have an impact right across regions but with particular resonance in Eastern Germany. Many challenges lie ahead with regard to restructuring of the industry and business.

He mentioned that the recently adopted European Commission proposals on a new chemicals policy for the EU contained some interesting new approaches; however, the sustainability of the industry must not be put at stake and least of all he insisted that we must all ensure that manufacturing is not driven out of Europe. Regions in which the chemical industry is significant need to play a major role to express and articulate their joint views.

Ingrid HÄUßLER, Mayor of the City of Halle set the scene by outlining the way in which the chemical industry has characterised the area around Halle and impacted upon local cultural heritage. The industrial and cultural turnabout has only taken place over the last few years as a result of a tremendous investment effort. There has been a price pay as many jobs have been lost in the restructuring process, but a new confidence is slowly emerging. The municipal government is trying to convert the city into a centre of learning and culture, science and industry with the new University just one of many new developments as witness to efforts to pool potential. She noted the importance of creating the right conditions for creating jobs and of making them sustainable. She expressed a great optimism in view of the forthcoming enlargement of the EU making the point that large-scale structural changes also bring about new opportunities.



1st Panel Discussion: Modern Environmental Policy in Chemical Regions:

Moderation by Cllr John FRASER, Cheshire County Council

Petra WERNICKE, *Minister for Agriculture and Environment of Saxony-Anhalt, DE*

“Environmental Policy in Saxony-Anhalt – current state of the art and future development”

Ms Wernicke initiated the debate by stressing that environmental protection requires co-operation of both industry and the government. She regards the new REACH proposals as still too complicated given that the aim was to simplify the existing chaos of regulations. Ms Wernicke insisted that whilst Europe-wide standards for safety should be established, regulations that can feasibly be implemented are required. The new policy must work for business, the environment and consumers.



Dr. Andreas Ahrens, Carol Watts, Petra Wernicke, Dr. Horst Rehberger, John Fraser, Ingrid Häußler, Prof. Maria Teresa Annovazzi, Dr. Christoph Mülhaus, Eduard Figuerola (v.r.n.l.)

The environmental alliance operating in Saxony-Anhalt could be regarded as a model forum for dialogue between industry and the environment, demonstrating positive results from many fruitful sectoral discussions between State Government and business. She also pointed out that there has been no indication of the availability of any potential Commission financing to implement. However, Ms Wernicke ended her contribution by highlighting the positive aspects within the new proposed policy and was glad that we could all work together to influence this policy through the European Chemical Regions Network.

Dr Andreas AHRENS, Ökopol HAMBURG, DE

“Testing REACH in practice – results of a simulation in North Rhine-Westphalia”

This contribution presented an evaluation of the workability of certain elements of REACH and put forward some proposals for improvement. The study did not aim to present conclusions as to whether the REACH system should be introduced in Europe, nor did it estimate the costs, the possible business risks or the possible benefits of REACH.



The simulation was undertaken as a joint initiative by 3 Ministries (Economy, Environment and State) and relevant industry associations. Four supply chains covering about 25 companies were involved: textile finishing; spray painting in car repair; additives in plastic processing and electroplating. Dr Ahrens emphasised the broad make-up of stakeholders in the supply chain which include: the producer of substances; importer of preparations; formulator of preparations and producer of substances; non-industrial professional users; industrial users for manufacturing of (semi)-finished goods; importer of (semi)-finished articles; consumer, and; the waste manager.

The simulation was facilitated and documented by external consultants with a trustee from industry assigned to each chain. A summary report with key results was produced alongside a project report across all chains and issues; 4 chain reports and 3 issue reports and documentation of 8 events, 2 in each chain. It was carried out between August and December 2003 with 7 weeks in each chain. The speaker noted that this was a very narrow time-frame. He also stressed that it is important to note that the simulation was carried out based on the basic Commission text before the actual publication of draft proposals for the new Chemicals Regulations.

Conclusions which emerged underlined the need for increased human resourcing in order to implement REACH given that the phase-in of substances will present a huge challenge to companies and authorities due to the high number of substances in a limited window of time. The simulation also noted that certain SMEs may get over-burdened without help from authorities, industry associations, and service providers of suppliers. SMEs will be required to register a large number of different substances at manufacturers or importers level. They could also be forced to carry out their own assessments if the suppliers' exposure scenario does not cover a specific use or the specific conditions of use.

The report also took account of the potential indirect impacts of REACH, noting firstly that consideration must be given to the possible consequence that the portfolio of available substances in the EU market will be reduced. He also mentioned that the value of products for the consumer may increase if it is “REACH tested”, and that sectors which produce a large number of chemicals in small volumes and are under heavy global competition may possibly not manage to transfer the extra costs to a sufficient extent to the consumers.

Finally, with regard to feeding in these results into the EU legislative process, this group has successfully put forward 9 out of 26 amendments to the technical annex of the Commission’s proposed regulation. They are assisting in the development of EU Guidance Documents within the Commission’s REACH Implementation Projects (13 out of 26 items). However Dr Ahrens concluded that further support needs to be organised at national or regional level.

Carol WATTS, Director, North West Chemical Initiative, Cheshire, UK

“Environmental Policy and Competitiveness – contradiction or essential combination?”

Carol Watts was formerly a Chief Executive of ICI. She introduced her presentation by describing the chemical industry in the North West of England. The North West is the largest regional centre for chemical manufacture in the UK with almost 800 related organisations and 430 chemical manufacturers, 147 basic commodity manufacturers and 283 speciality, fine and pharmaceutical companies.

In addition, 220 companies offer specialist service support with 130 sales offices. The industry employs 43,000 highly skilled people and at least 120,000 people provide specialist support i.e. this translates that the industry in the North West is supporting over 160,000 jobs.

The focus of the presentation was on the views of companies in the North West of England with regard to environmental policy and its impact upon business. Without a doubt compliance is part of the game and compliance legislation continues to increase with many health and safety, environmental and IPPC regulations already in place and now, the impending controls from the REACH dossier.

She made the important point that environmental compliance becomes a competitive tool as a key element of an integrated management system. As an illustration, Ms Watts assumed a budget of 200,000 GBP for a site to manage environmental information and audits.



This also assumes a 50% reduction in data collection and aggregation of costs through an Integrated Management System of compliance audit and assessment and integrated audit tracking. Resultant saving of 62,000 GBP p.a. The key, she stressed, is how you use this saving for competitive advantage. Leading companies understand that effective environmental management leads to competitive advantage. She cited, “Shell companies believe that the best approach to climate care is to make it part of a sound business rationale, and that a strong commitment to a sustainable future is the best basis for sound business”. She also demonstrated a case study of the leading UK company Marks and Spencer. Their brand reputation is of paramount importance and as a result they have signed up to the “Risky Chemicals Pledge” campaign in search of supply chain transparency and to really understand what chemicals are going into their products. Their view is that they should be driving the agenda before events overtake.

To conclude, she reiterated support for the objectives of the proposed new EU chemicals regulations but did question how it will be implemented in practice. She emphasised the essential combination of environmental policy and competitiveness as the key to sustainability of business.

Eduard FIGUEROLA, *Ministry of Labour and Industry, Catalonia, SP*

“Co-operation of regional and industrial actors to prevent major accident hazards”

Mr Figuerola initially presented an overview of the regional profile of the chemical industry in Catalonia which accounts for 14% of industrial added value. The turnover of the Catalan chemical industry stands for some 42% of the total Spanish sector with more than 9% of the industrial workforce (60.000 employees).

He stressed the diversification of the sector with activities ranging from petrochemical, pharmacy, plastic transformation and manufacturing of final consumer goods. The chemical industry is clustered mostly around the regions of Barcelona and Tarragona.

His paper set out the actions taken in order to prevent a major accidents hazard in the largest Spanish petrochemical site, located near to Tarragona.

The case-study was that of the emergency plan of Tarragona, which is an example of joint working between both public and private sectors involving Catalan and Spanish governments, municipalities, chemical companies and other organisations.

Given that chemical process plants produce, handle, transport and store chemical products, potential hazards must be given consideration. In order to reduce the accident risk, in Catalonia, both the public administrations and industrial sector have undertaken preventative and protective actions.



The public sector has competence over passing and enforcing regulations; inspecting and controlling the plants; providing public services such as fire brigade, police, civil defence, health service and drawing up the external emergency plans. The private sector deals with staff training; plant design to minimise the risks; setting up their own emergency services especially with regard to fire prevention and; the drawing up of internal emergency plans. Mr Figuerola went on the present some of the main statistics as regards the Tarragona petrochemical site with production plants including, amongst others, Dow, Bayer, Basf and Shell. Cumulated investment amounts to 5.800 MEURO with a production capacity of 18 millions tonnes per year. The estimated contribution of the chemical industry to the Tarragona region GDP accounts for 15%. The Catalan government plays a role to ensure that a major accident prevention policy and safety management system has been put into effect, that major accident hazards have been identified and that the necessary measures have been taken to prevent such accidents happening to limit their consequences. The Catalan authorities draw up the external emergency plan based upon this data with regard to specific areas in the vicinity of the main chemical sites. The PLASEQTA is the emergency plan of the Tarragona chemical sector and it sets out the roles of each specific actor involved in the operation of the plan as well as the overall strategic framework. This is elaborated in the slides included at the presentation sections of the Congress report.

Mr Figuerola concluded by emphasising the crucial contribution made by regional governments to enhance safety by engaging in promotional efforts, stating that the most effective way to improve safety is first and foremost to ensure constant investment in state-of-the-art technologies and processes.

Dr.-Ing. Christoph MÜHLHAUS, *Managing Director, DOW Olefinverbund GmbH, DE*

“Sustainable development in modern chemical sites”

Dr Mûhlhaus started his presentation by focusing on the DOW operating philosophy, that of three parts to a sustainable enterprise: economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and social responsibility. His company was faced with the enormous challenge of restructuring throughout the 1990s. At the start of the decade 3 stand-alone companies were present with high staffing of 26.000 and more than 60% of the production based on coal chemistry. Environmental pollution was a major scourge. Restructuring provided the basis for sustainability and involved a massive revamping of plants, introduction of new labour processes, modernisation of production, employee development, investments and above all a technological and cultural sea change. It was imperative that these companies had to become competitive. Today, Dr Mûhlhaus was able to demonstrate that as a competitive company, it is part of a global operating enterprise and a well-recognised corporate citizen.

As regards sustainable development and innovations, the close link between the development of polymers and plastics technology in Central Germany offers the opportunity to establish a competence centre for innovation. A Value Park with 13 national and international investors on site has been developed to



promote economic, ecological and social linkages. Engagement in the region is demonstrated with the employee development programmes in place; 400 apprenticeships offer a professional opportunity to young people and co-operation with universities supports and develops the scientists of tomorrow.

Since 1995 accidents on-site have vastly decreased, emissions of PTBs, known human carcinogens, ozone depletors and high volume toxic compounds have also been hugely reduced and DOW is also working on reducing energy consumption by 2% p.a.

Dr Mùhlhaus reiterated that there was still much work to do, but it was essential to also remember the levels from where the company has moved. He set out some examples of environmental stewardship such as the former water treatment facilities now used as biotopes and the advances in urban land use planning. In summing up, Dr Mùhlhaus reminded the audience that Europe and Germany have greatly invested in the Central German chemical industry. The chemical industry needs to grow in order to be effective and sustainable. As a final word, he stressed that REACH needed to be implemented in a way to allow the maintenance of a high level of environmental stewardship and health protection while avoiding unnecessary cost and bureaucracy.

Summarising the 1st Panel, Cllr John Fraser, Cheshire County Council underlined the need for simplification of the draft European proposals and for continued dialogue to try and reach a workable compromise. He reiterated the main discussion points raised during each of the presentations, focusing in particular on the constructive research carried out in the simulation of the workability of REACH as a means of raising awareness as to the potential negative business impacts. “Implementation of REACH will clearly require an increase in resources, he stated, “and it is important to be aware also of possible indirect impacts of new legislation, such as the potential headaches around the cross border supply chain”.

2nd Panel Discussion: Future Chemicals Policy of the EU as a challenge for European Chemicals Regions:

Moderation by Hajo FRIEDRICH, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Brussels

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang BÖHMER,

Prime Minister of Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt, DE

Dr Böhmer firstly welcomed Commissioner Wallström to Saxony-Anhalt and thanked her for the interest she had displayed in both the Congress and the work of the European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN). He explained the background to the ECRN which presently has 13 participating members. He noted that representatives from approximately 20 regions were present in the Congress allowing for lively exchanges and providing an opportunity to present and formulate ideas jointly on current issues.



Dr. Gerd Romanowski, Margot Wallström, Hajo Friedrich, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer, John Hontelez (v.l.n.r.)

He mentioned the processes, involving major investments which have been fundamental to the restructuring of industry in Saxony-Anhalt. Nowadays the chemical industry in Saxony-Anhalt is considered modern and efficient, continuing to increase its market share and reduce emissions.

However, although the industry has been successful in reducing environmental pollution by 95%, Dr Böhmer recognised that in order to be even more competitive, further increases would be required. The industry employs 312,000 people, but given a regional unemployment rate in the order of 20%, job creation is of crucial importance. Efforts to continually develop dialogue between the state government and industry are essential to reach goals to deliver higher employment rates. He went on to mention the merits of the environmental alliance created in Saxony-Anhalt between environmental associations and industry which encourage industrial associations and companies to include environmental concepts into their plans.

On the European Commission plans for the new REACH regulations, Dr Böhmer welcomed the fact that many of their concerns have already been taken on board. However he emphasised the potential burdens for medium-sized businesses and insisted on the need to find practical solutions to implement the REACH proposals.

Commissioner Margot WALLSTRÖM, *Member of the European Commission*

EC's Environment Commissioner Wallström started her speech by stressing the basics. "The use of chemicals is a pre-requisite in modern life," she stated, noting that "chemicals are involved in all aspects of life from food to clothes, to computers to cars". She welcomed the creation of the European Chemical Regions Network and fully endorsed this forum as a most useful platform for sharing information, delivering joint views and exchanging experience. She reiterated that the Commission is open to hear views from the network and encouraged strong ECRN involvement in the legislative process.



Commissioner Wallström insisted that there is no "either / or". The proposals for a new regulation on chemicals have been drawn up bearing in mind the necessity to both protect the environment and keep the industry competitive and sustainable.

As consumers and citizens of Europe, we should be concerned about the increasing 'body burden' of chemicals of which long-term effects to the individual are uncertain. But concerns about environmental and health protection need to be balanced with maintaining a competitive chemicals industry in Europe. The Commissioner also made the point that a 'user-safe' label could bring competitive advantage. She stressed that the whole proposal is based on the precautionary principle in line with the consumer need for information. She went on to set out the major flaws in today existing regulations, which are 20 years old. Currently there is an artificial divide between 'old' and 'new' chemicals, whereby substances which were put on the market before 1981 are not required to undergo the testing regimes. The whole testing responsibility currently lies with public authorities. There is a need to share the burden.

The proposed regulations are the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders and, at core aim to enhance competitiveness without compromising health or the environment. She concluded her intervention by presenting a threefold challenge to the ECRN:

- Industry associations and regional authorities have the responsibility for raising awareness of the new regulations as SMEs will need time to apply for assistance in order to comply with the laws;

- Industry will be required to put forward regional experts to assist with the technical guidance document;
- Industry and regional authorities will also need to facilitate communication channels between manufacturers and downstream users.

Commissioner Wallström reminded the audience that this was effectively a test case for the principles of sustainable development. She ended by reiterating how hugely complex an issue this had become, both in legal and technical terms, which continues to require open-minded communication between all stakeholders, and stressed, “REACH is not asking for anything new! It is a sign of times in the age of the consumer”.

Gerd ROMANOWSKI, Director of Technologies and Environmental Affairs, Verband der Chemischen Industrie e.V.

Mr Romanowski started by pointing out the fact that the chemicals industry is already highly regulated, “We are not starting from scratch”. He listed a raft of regulations with which the industry already complies, such as laws on health and safety and hazardous substances amongst many others. Beyond statutory requirements, Mr Romanowski noted that many companies have also developed their own initiatives and also take other international regulations such as those emanating from the OECD into consideration.



Extensive information on substances already exists. He argued that consumer fears of chemical products as ‘disease-causing’, were largely unfounded. It is clear that more substances can be identified in the environment and human body than before as detection measures are so much more advanced. Certain types of cancer do appear to be on the increase but research shows that the industry has little impact on this. Lifestyle trends, and the fact that life expectancy has increased, must be taken into consideration.

He argued that although REACH will create a database, it will not obtain a quantum leap in environmental and health protection. It is clear that more substances can be identified in the environment and human body than before as detection measures are so much more advanced. Certain types of cancer do appear to be on the increase but research shows that the industry has little impact on this. Lifestyle trends, and the fact that life expectancy has increased, must be taken into consideration.

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Mr Romanowski considered that high levels have already been achieved. The Chemical Industry still however supports the objectives of the new regulatory proposals, but is disappointed with the draft document. It is important to note that dangerous properties do not necessarily imply a risk. Risk is more related to actual exposure levels. Uniform rules have not yet been achieved. There is much room for improvement and this document still presents overlaps. He concluded by offering expertise from his company to become practically involved in carrying out more pilot projects which are required to assess impacts.

John HONTELEZ, Director, European Environmental Bureau



Mr Hontelez stated that the European Environmental Bureau considered the overhaul of the REACH proposals as one of the most important issues in environmental policy-making for many years. As the use of chemicals is a given in everyday life, he outlined the need to draw distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' chemicals.

The EEB views the REACH proposals as an opportunity for a new start and supports the aims of REACH as the right way forward. The proposals, considered Mr Hontelez, should be viewed not as a burden but rather as a means of simplifying existing rules which are set out in a raft of more than 40 laws. He also insisted that while the EEB appreciated the concerns of the ECRN, it is also imperative to protect the environment and health of Europe's citizens. Mr Hontelez raised the issue of job losses in the industry describing this as unfounded. The European Commission impact assessment has shown that for large companies costs will be minimal. However, he was supportive of further investigations into the impact of REACH implementation on SMEs for the registration of substances. The EEB believes that public authorities need to take a balanced view. The use of chemicals is of a very high concern. The EEB insists on the principle of substitutions, otherwise consumers will continue to be exposed to risk. There is a need to close the information gap. The EEB would like to see all information available in a uniform standard way. The information must be of the right standard subjected to quality assurance and quality control, and perhaps most crucially, accessible to the public. "Europe is the world's largest market", said Mr Hontelez, "It should not be afraid of setting standards".

A lively debate followed the different presentations, with points raised in relation to the need for an impact assessment for downstream users taking also into consideration the new Member States. The Commissioner stated that the accession countries would have a transition period of at least 11 years to implement REACH. Industry representatives commented on concerns they still have with the rigid sets of data as substances that cannot afford the registration will be lost. Commissioner Wallström concluded the discussion by reminding the audience that never before have there been so many working groups and consultees on a single issue. It is therefore inevitable that there will be compromises but she stressed that the proposals have been improved by all the contributions and she remains optimistic that we will reach a 'common language'.

3rd Panel Discussion: Chemicals Regions as Knowledge regions in an enlarged Europe:

Moderation by Rudolf BOHN, Secretary of State, Ministry for Economy and Labour of Saxony-Anhalt

Prof. Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, Minister for Science of Saxony-Anhalt

“Co-operation of Universities and Business within the strategy dialogue with the chemical industry in Saxony-Anhalt”



Dr. Rinaldo Psaro, Giampaolo Amadori, Prof. Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, Rudolf Bohn, Jean Severijns, Jan Dopfer, Steve Duncan (v.r.n.l.)

Prof. Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, warmly welcomed the establishment of the European Chemical Regions Network. Saxony-Anhalt as traditional location for the chemical industry has seen an impressive structural change, where the chemical cluster remains to be one of the most important sectors for investments, research and employment in the region. Besides the difficult process of transformation today the chemical industry is a modern and highly competitive industry due to the joint efforts of industry and politics. Prof. Olbertz stressed the need for a stronger cooperation between enterprises, science and administration. The strategy dialogue “Chemistry” in Saxony-Anhalt is a good basis for the establishment of clusters in Central Germany. Especially the cooperation with the research and university sector needs to be further developed. The reform of the university structures in Saxony-Anhalt will pay its contribution to this objective. Successful examples can be found in the demonstration centre for polymers of the Fraunhofer Institute in the Value Park in Schkopau and the new technology centre for nano-structured materials in Halle.



Prof. Olbertz presented a strategy paper of the research cluster “Chemistry” in Central Germany that should support a stronger European cooperation of science and enterprises. Representatives from universities and enterprises have identified 5 main research areas of excellence: 1. CeChemNet Central European Chemical Network”, 2. Active substances and special chemistry, 3. New Materials, 4. e-Services for trans-regional networks, 5. Polymers and plastic.

Based on this main sectors Saxony-Anhalt together with Lombardia and other interested regions have the objective to work out an Integrated Project in the 6th research framework programme. Prof. Olbertz invited all interested actors to join their efforts in this cooperation idea.

Steve Duncan, Regional Development Agency ONE Northeast

“Management of Innovation in Chemical Regions – The Centre for Process Innovation”



Mr Steve Duncan from the One North East presented the work of the EPICC European Process Industries Competitiveness Centre, which has the objective to improve the innovation in chemical regions.

The EPICC Centre of Excellence is supporting SME’s in the North East of England to increase the employment by facilitating additional investments in technological development in order to improve competitiveness of SME’s in process industries. Therefore the EPICC uses one to one business advice, best practice clubs and industry-led events. 5 Centres of Excellence have already been established that have supported 5 million pounds investment focused on innovative applied research.

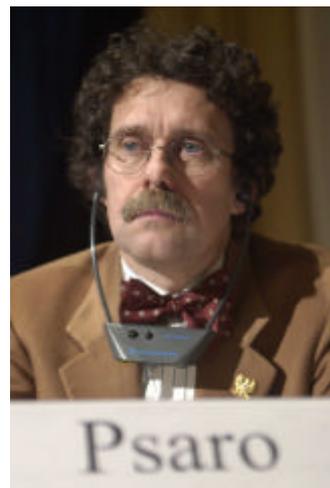
Dr. Rinaldo Psaro, Research Manager, CNR National Research Council, Region Lombardia

“Strategies of Chemical Regions for the European Research Area”

On behalf of Prof. Renato Ugo President of the Italian Association for Industrial Research, Dr. Rinaldo Psaro, gave a presentation on the strategies of chemical regions for the European Research Area from the Lombardian perspective. Based on the example of the innovation activities of the chemical industry in Italy, he presented the main challenges for Research and Development.

The European economy has to face competition from the emerging countries, whereas the chemical industry needs to keep a strong relationship with the science sector. For the single chemical company this means to innovate not only in processes but also in the product.

Dr. Psaro gave a short overview of the wide spread of the chemical enterprises in Europe. Besides the major enterprises the SME play an important role, especially in the innovation process. They conduct “in-house” research and product innovation and guarantee innovative developments in all industrial sectors. But at the same time they are facing new producer competition and commodity risks. Therefore, innovation is needed in the chemical industry in Europe to ensure a quality workforce, to become a supplier to highly innovative sectors and to groundbreaking industries. The future of many traditional sectors will depend on product innovation supplied by chemicals. Dr. Psaro was criticising that in the last decade the support of the chemical research has been a very limited part of the activities by the European Union. Therefore, a strong European network is needed to enforce the role of the regions as focus of chemical research in Europe. This objective could be achieved by reinforcing links between universities and public research centres, joint research projects and stronger relationships among companies and between them and public research of different regions. Also the new EU chemical policy has to be influenced in order to improve the situation for the SMEs and R&D. Under the slogan “co-operate to compete” Dr. Psaro stressed the need for intensive cooperation and exchange of experiences in the European Chemical Regions Network, that will increase the competitiveness of the regions by innovation.



Jan Dopper, Member of the Managing Board of DSM, Limburg

“Future challenges for Innovation and Human Resource development”

Mr. Jan Dopper started its presentation with a look back to the transformation process of DSM that started as local, state-owned mining company and today represents a global, multi-billion, publicly listed corporation on the verge of becoming a leading specialty company. The convergence of scientific developments and the blurring of scientific boundaries as served DSM as innovation engine to discover new technologies. The future innovation-to-market strategy will rely on the continuously observation of trends and changing markets, the consideration of general needs of the community and the use of knowledge from third parties.

The gap between industrial research and the science and technology sector should be bridged by public/private institutions, start-ups or corporate venturing. DSM Research itself aims to improve its innovation process through collaboration with external partners such as academia, corporate venturing and industry. Based on a citation from Leonardo da Vinci, Mr Dopfer concluded its presentation with the vision of DSM: “Where nature finishes producing its own species, DSM begins, using natural things and with the help of this nature, to create an infinity of new processes and products.”



In summarising the workshop, *Mr Jean Severijns* from the Province of Limburg stressed again the importance of research and development and innovation for the chemical regions. It plays a major role in strengthening competitiveness, growth and employments in the regions. Therefore, the European Chemical Regions Network will put a main focus on this particular topic in supporting the exchange of experience and facilitating the cooperation between R&D actors and institutions. The project “Mentoring European Knowledge of Chemical Regions” and the joint efforts to participate in the integrated project inside the 6th

FPR are first good examples to strengthen the partner of the network as “Knowledge Regions”.

General Assembly of the Network

Reinhard Reibsch, General Secretary of the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers’ Federation

Mr. Reinhard Reibsch, General Secretary of the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workes Federation, which represents 128 Trade Unions with 2,6 million members, most of them from the chemical industry, gave his welcome to the participants of the European Congress of Chemical Regions. The challenges of the internal market and globalisation have increased the need for cooperation especially in the chemical industry.



Therefore, he supports the establishment of the European Chemical Regions Network and is looking forward to a fruitful cooperation. In many areas, such as the new EU Chemicals Policy and the Reach System there is a common interest for the development of sustainable and realistic solutions that combine economic, social and environmental interests. Furthermore, Mr. Reibsch stressed the importance of the human capital, qualification and soft skills for the innovation capacity of the chemical enterprises. The past intense cooperation of trade unions, enterprises and the regions has already shown its success in the coping of the structural change. This cooperation should also be an example for the European Chemical Regions Network, in order to work together for the achievement of the objectives for competitiveness and employments that have been set in the Lisbon Agenda.

Magne Haugseng, Development Initiative for Chemical Industry Dependent Areas - DICIDA-Network UK

Magne Haugseng opened the General Assembly of the European Chemical Regions Network. In presenting the activity plan for the year 2004 he stressed the need for the establishment of a sustainable partnership between the European partners but also inside the regions to involve all relevant actors. Therefore, the



main focus of the work in 2004 will be on the exchange of information about the structures, actors and policies in the partner region to get to know each other. At the end of this process a compendium of the "Who is Who in Chemical Regions" will be published to disseminate this knowledge. Furthermore, Mr. Haugseng presented the list of the founding members of the Network Executive that has been accepted by the Congress.

As the first president of the European Chemical Regions Network, Dr. Horst Rehberger, Minister of Economy and Labour of the Land Saxony-Anhalt has been elected.



The other members of the Executive are: Councillor Tony Richmond, Darlington Borough Council, UK / Councillor Dr. John Fraser, Chair of Cheshire County Council's Economic Development Board, Cheshire County; Boguslaw Kowalski, Vice-Marshal Of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Poland, Martin Eurlings, Minister of Economy, Province Limburg, Netherlands; Karl-Uwe Büttof, Head of Department, Ministry for Economy and Labour, North-Rhine Westfalia, Germany; Giampaolo Amadori, General Director for Handicraft, New Economy, Research and Technologic Innovation, Lombardia, Italy; Dr. Eduard Figuerola, General Directorate for Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain).

In thanking the audience for giving him the support and the trust for taking the responsibility as first president of the European Chemical Regions Network, **Dr. Rehberger** stressed his strong commitment for the successful establishment of the network. The first objective should be the strengthening of cooperation between all relevant actors in the region to represent the common interest.

Even if the regions are sometimes competing with each other, a cooperation and the improvement of framework conditions should strengthen the European position in the worldwide competition. Dr. Rehberger invited also other regions in Europe, such as France, Czech Republic and Belgium to join the network. In the are of the EU Chemical Policy he urged the Commission to develop practicable solutions that ensure the competitiveness of the enterprises. Innovation and knowledge management should be another focus of the network activities. Dr. Rehberger invited the members of the network executive to a first meeting in Berlin and is looking forward to an intense and fruitful cooperation in the next year.

Evening Reception of the Central German Chemical Industry

Dr. Gerwald F. Grahe, President of Landesverband Nordost des Verbandes der Chemischen Industrie e.V.

Dr. Grahe welcomed the participants of the European Conference of Chemical Regions to a reception held by the Landesverband Nordost of the Association of the German Chemical Industry. He gave his strong support for the establishment of the European Chemical Regions Network to develop a stronger European cooperation that is beneficial for all. The experiences of East Germany can be of special importance in the area of restructuring and environmental protection. Since 1989 the emissions could be reduced by 95 per cent and besides the growth of production the emissions are further decreasing. By the joint efforts of employers, investors and the trade unions, 14,1 billion Euro have been invested in the structural change in East Germany.



Today 44.800 employees work in a highly competitive and modern chemical industry that is growing faster than the average German industry. Saxony-Anhalt, where one third of the turnover of the chemical industry in East Germany is generated, plays an important role for these positive developments. The outlook for 2004 is optimistic and the enterprises are looking forward to a economic pick-up. This should be used to push forward the European cooperation in the interest of all stakeholders.

4th Panel Discussion: Regional Policy in Chemical Regions in an enlarged Europe:

Moderation by Dr Gunthard Bratzke, isw – Institute for Structural Policy and Economic Promotion gGmbH

Examples of the use of structural funds for supporting the restructuring process of chemical sites



Antonio Cáceres, Steve Duncan, Toni Richmond, Dr. Gunthard Bratzke, Andreas Hiltermann, Richard Hlavaty, Miroslaw Lewinski (v.l.n.r.)

Dr Steve DUNCAN, *Regional Development Agency ONE Northeast, U.K.*

Dr Duncan started by providing the audience with an overview of the North of England, home to three regional development agencies: Yorkshire Forward, North West Development Agency and One NorthEast. Each has a geographical responsibility but they act jointly in collaborations e.g. North of England Inward Investment Office. There are four chemicals-related regional cluster organisations, strength of the combined actions of these eight organisations, which has successfully supported the Chemical Industry in the North of England. He summarised the approach as: study; build capacity and deliver.



The region has a GDP of EUR400bn and a population of 14.5 million people. It is home to 22 universities and colleges and 3,600 international companies, including amongst many others, Proctor and Gamble, Shell, Solvay, Dow, BASF and Unilever. As regards infrastructure, the region is served by 7 international airports and 13 deep sea ports. He went on to describe the UK's chemicals industry which is the 6th largest in the world, with the sector accounting for 10% of all UK manufacturing output.

It extends across the North East, the North West, Yorkshire, Scotland and the South West. The industry spends more than EUR5.5bn per annum on research and development and employs 200,000+ people directly and 170,000 indirectly. Sales of chemicals, chemical products and man-made fibres amount to EUR70bn. The industry is maturing quickly and this includes, for example, speciality chemicals. The business model moves ever closer to that of consumer and retail. The search for growth and margin is driving globalisation. Direct manufacturing is being exported as is service e.g. design & development. The north has a substantial chemical distribution and logistic service industry and this has led to the growth of a very strong supporting engineering sector.

He pointed out the consideration of the STEEPLE factors in their work: social, technological, environmental, economic, political, legislative and ecological. Dr Duncan pointed out that although these drivers at first sight suggest all the negatives faced, it is important to realise that strategies which do not consider these are less likely to be successful.

The North East region has been growing internationally competitive clusters, based on its knowledge base and Centres of Excellence, with high levels of innovation, productivity and skills. The region also has recognised Centres of Excellence in key areas of science and engineering and is regarded by scientists, entrepreneurs and investors as one of the preferred locations for building technology based businesses and developing careers. Dr Duncan set out the three objectives for regional economic development: productivity enhancement to increase output and competitiveness; innovation with development in R&D and gap identification and response with improved infrastructure and strengthening of the cluster through investment. He insisted that success is not the result of one project, one person or one fund - success comes from many and diverse projects, from the efforts of many teams and many alliances and especially through using the various funds appropriately. He also covered the key areas of alliances, clusters, innovation, R&D & technology transfer, skills & training, image and environmental sustainability. Several alliances have been established and clusters developed. There is a National Liaison Group where the regional clusters exchange best practice and experience and agree projects in which they should act in partnership. Dr Duncan briefly outlined an example of a cluster project funded from EU ERDF monies with the University as the lead organisation. This project provides co-ordinated, high level, intensive support for new and existing SMEs, in designated clusters. It enables companies to identify and implement a range of techniques leading to an improvement in efficiency and competitiveness.

This project achieves this by assisting SMEs in the use and application of optimal reliability techniques and uses proven methodology called Six Sigma to drive institutional change within the company via continuous improvement processes. It focuses on the customer requirements of a company, process improvement, cross-structural co-operation and enables companies to identify priority projects and improve their 'bottom line'.

Centres of Excellences and Chemical Parks are making great inroads to support and continue to attract and grow hi-tech businesses. Major strides have been taken to enhance engineering and process training delivery within chemical clusters. A new training centre has been built for engineering and process technicians and support offered to new engineering apprenticeship programmes. Efforts are also being focused on image and reputation of the industry with the value of the sector being promoted within schools and companies assisted with improving their community relationships. Environmental sustainability is also high on the agenda with pollution minimisation, land reclamation with reuse or greening and industrial symbiosis all aimed at protecting the environment. Dr Duncan presented a second example of an ERDF revenue project in Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control – essentially a thematic approach to environmental best practice. IPPC is about minimising pollution, requiring all installations covered by the Directive to obtain an Integrated Permit from the notified national authority.

The purpose of the project is to identify those SMEs likely to be affected by IPPC, and provide them with intensive consultancy to help them embed environmental best practice, increase their in-house capacity to implement such practice, thereby enabling them to more easily comply with IPPC legislation. Dr Duncan concluded his presentation by reiterating that success was being achieved through alliances and collaboration and through support on many levels – local, regional, national and European.

Antonio Cáceres, Director, Department for Local Development and Employment, Huelva County Council, SP

Mr Cáceres set out a profile of the county of Huelva in Andalusia in southern Spain. GDP for the region is on the increase. Efficiency and productivity of the chemical industry has increased steadily even if the share of the sector is proportionally down. In the 1940's and 50's the chemical industry in the region was characterised by mining, later choosing to concentrate on certain important areas.

Nowadays the concept of the industrial park is hugely significant in the region housing chemicals and basic material industries with a production value of 3.2 billion EUR in 2002. Crude oil refining has the largest share with 39% followed by the chemicals and metal sectors at 25% respectively. In employment terms though the number of employees has decreased with many auxiliaries working for sub-contractors. Mr Cáceres also made mention of the fact that the public sector has been making great strides in reducing environmental impact.



Andreas HILTERMANN, *Infrastruktur und Service GmbH, DE*



This presentation focused on the use of structural funds to support the restructuring process in the chemical site in Leuna. In 1989 he described the industry as being “too large, too unfocused, and too slow to react to changes.....not competitive”. Business units were not focused on core business and the products were not competitive on

an international market. Factories were not operating on an economy of scale. Results were unrealistic as were statements regarding profit and loss. The road to privatisation was cumbersome and confused.

He outlined the process for developing Leuna to a multi-company site in 5 main steps from 1990 to 1997. The first step involved the spin-off of parts unnecessary for production (e.g. kindergarten and housing). Privatisation of the first production units was next with privatisation of some service units following. More production units were then privatised and additionally central units. The final step was the building of new production units. Most of the infrastructure operated today by InfraLeuna has been modernised and the company is continually developing the site to attract new chemical investors and service providers.

Mr Hilterman set out some facts and figures of the Leuna chemical site, “a site with a future”. Before 1989 it was the largest industrial area in the GDR with approx. 11 km². Today it is one of the largest industrial sites in central Europe with an area of approx. 13 km² and a transported volume of about 8.3 M tonnes/year. It sustains around 9.000 competitive jobs with several large international companies and numerous medium-sized production companies operating units. Previously “Kombinat Leuna” was the single operator of production, infrastructure and service units, and social entities such as swimming pool and hospital.

Environmental impact has been reduced by 95% and investments of about EUR 1 BN have been secured for modernisation of the infrastructure (energy supply, pipe racks, streets). Achieving this success required the use of 500 Million EUR investment to restructure the entire infrastructure over 9 years. Since 1990 Leuna has attracted more than 5 BN EUR of investment with the on-site companies registered shareholders of InfraLeuna. The use of European funds was pivotal to make the transition and Mr Hilterman ended on a positive note, saying that, “We are now geared for success in the future”.

Challenges for the use of structural funds in the chemical sites in Poland and the Czech Republic

Dr Richard HLAVATY, *Head of European Integration, Ministry for Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic*

Dr Hlavaty set out the positive features of the Czech Chemical Sector. He noted the favourable geographic position and advanced relations with the EU and CEFTA. The country offered a investment friendly climate with a highly qualified labour force and a high level of implementation of EC law. Many companies are ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certified and involved in the programme of 'responsible care'. Germany is the largest business partner. Main challenges facing the industry summed up Dr Hlavaty, as the completion of privatisation and the implementation of the new chemicals legislation of REACH. The state still holds a 63% majority in the largest petrochemical complex in the Czech Republic 'UNIPETROL'.



He went on to briefly outline the operational programme for industry and enterprise (OPIE) which has as its global objective to increase competitiveness in the industry and entrepreneurial services. He concluded by looking at the priorities for 2004-2006. The main focus will lie on business environment development; development of enterprise competitiveness and technical assistance.

Mirosław LEWINSKI, *Deputy Director at the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, Department of Industrial Policy, Poland*

Mr Lewinski started by pointing out the strong co-operation between Germany and Poland. Germany is their third biggest investor. Poland is crucially in the final stages of setting up systems to utilise EU funds. A National Development Programme will come into play 2004-2006 with co-financing beginning possibly at the end of February. Vital learning and experience has been gathered from Germany. The first strand 'increasing industrial competitiveness' will try to harness effective use of new technologies. A strategy 2010 for the chemical industry in Poland has been adopted and has 5 strands:



1. to improve the structure;

2. to optimise costs and increase investments;
3. to decrease deficit of foreign trade in chemicals;
4. better organisation of scientific staff;
5. to prepare for the economic environment of the EU.

He reiterated the importance of regions to co-operate with central administrations and the facilitation of good clear channels of information flows. He concluded by stating that the creation of the network was extremely important for everyone in the chemical industry, with particular regard to the implementation of the REACH proposals.

Summarising the 4th Panel, Cllr Tony Richmond, Darlington Borough Council argued that 3 main tasks and challenges lie ahead. In order to deal with all these challenges it is best for all component parts to work together and to present a united front to try and influence the decision-



makers. The first challenge will be to absorb the chemical industry in the new accession states. One advantage is that we can draw on the experience of the GDR as many of the same problems were confronted. Secondly lies the challenge of the changing shape of the world economy. Countries such as Brazil, India and China are on track to overtake and become the biggest economies in the world. And finally, the chemical industry needs to interact better and more effectively with the EU Institutions. Previously groups have been fragmented and there are surely benefits of working through one organisation. It is crucial to make an input early into the consultation process. He concluded by quoting, “United we succeed. Divided we fall”.

Dr. Gunthard Bratzke from the isw Institut again stressed the challenges of enlargement. Therefore, the experiences that exist in the European Chemical Regions Network and that have been intensively discussed today should be exploited in the future to the benefit of all regions.

Erklärung des 2. Europäischen Kongresses der Chemieregionen

Declaration of the 2nd European Congress of Chemical Regions

Erklärung des 2. Europäischen Kongresses der Chemieregionen vom 5./6.02.04 in Halle/Saale

1. Chemieregionen in Europa

Chemieregionen in Europa werden zunehmend als wichtige Akteure in der Entwicklung und Umsetzung von Politiken für die Chemieindustrie vor Ort anerkannt. Ihnen kommt dabei oftmals die Rolle zu, europäische Vorgaben auf regionaler Ebene umzusetzen und gleichzeitig praktikable Lösungen mit den betroffenen Unternehmen zu finden.

Das Europäische Netzwerk der Chemieregionen zielt darauf ab, die regionale Dimension stärker in das Bewusstsein der europäischen Akteure bei der Ausgestaltung von Politikbereichen zu rücken. Der große Erfolg des ersten Kongresses europäischer Chemieregionen am 21.05.03 in Brüssel, an dem mehr als 250 Vertreter aus über 20 europäischen Chemieregionen teilnahmen, hat deutlich gemacht, dass sehr wohl Platz und Bedarf für ein europäisches Netzwerk von Chemieregionen vorhanden ist. Aufbauend auf diesen positiven Erfahrungen werden die Chemieregionen in den nächsten 12 Monaten die notwendigen Strukturen und Regelungen schaffen, damit das Netzwerk seine Aufgaben auch dauerhaft erfüllen kann. Die europäischen Chemieregionen fordern gleichzeitig die Europäischen Institutionen auf, dieses Netzwerk künftig als „europäischer Stakeholder“ für die regionalen Belange anzuerkennen.

2. Die künftige Ausgestaltung der Chemikalienpolitik in Europa

Die Debatte über die künftige Ausgestaltung der Chemikalienpolitik war ein wichtiger Anstoß der Regionen, sich künftig enger zusammen zu schließen.

Mit Blick auf die Ende vergangenen Jahres von der Europäischen Kommission vorgelegten Verordnungsvorschläge unterstreichen die europäischen Chemieregionen ihre bereits im Mai 2003 aufgestellten Grundsätze,

- den Schutz der Gesundheit der Bürgerinnen und Bürger und insbesondere der Arbeitnehmer/innen in Europa,
- die Verringerung von Risiken und Belastungen für heutige und künftige Ökosysteme, die Sicherung bestehender Arbeitsplätze durch Wahrung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der europäischen Wirtschaft,
- Entwicklung neuer Arbeitsplätze durch Verbesserung der Innovationsfähigkeit,
- Planungs- und Rechtssicherheit zur Förderung von Investitionen,
- Achtung ethischer Maßstäbe,

- Partizipative Ausgestaltung des politischen Entscheidungs- und Umsetzungsprozesses zur dauerhaften Entwicklungsfähigkeit des Sektors unter Einbeziehung der Regionen.

Die europäischen Chemieregionen begrüßen, dass die Europäische Kommission in ihren Vorschlägen vom 29.10.03 wichtige Forderungen übernommen hat, insbesondere indem

- Polymere von der Registrierung und Bewertung ausgenommen wurden,
- die Anforderungen für unter strenger Kontrolle transportierte Zwischenprodukte gesenkt wurden,
- der Schutz von Geschäftsgeheimnissen verbessert wurde,
- die besondere Situation der Chemieparks berücksichtigt wurde. kein Zulassungsverfahren auf nationaler Ebene vorgesehen ist,
- die Anforderungen an den Chemikaliensicherheitsbericht deutlich verringert wurden
- zur Verbesserung der Rechtssicherheit der Bereich der möglichen Rechtsmittel gegen Entscheidungen der Agentur erweitert wurde und

Es ist unerlässlich, dass diese Verbesserungen im weiteren Gesetzgebungsverfahren erhalten bleiben. Weiter müssen die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen von REACH sorgfältig vor dem Gesetzgebungsverfahren untersucht werden, um negative Folgewirkungen für die europäische Industrie zu vermeiden.

Es gilt zu konstatieren, dass wichtige Forderungen sowohl im Sinne des Umwelt- und Gesundheitsschutzes als auch zur Entlastung der Wirtschaft nicht oder nur unkonkret aufgenommen worden sind. Insbesondere fehlt eine umfassende Analyse der bestehenden Regelungen, wie dies vom Ministerrat, Parlament, aber auch in der Gemeinsamen Position angesprochen wurde. Daher ist wahrscheinlich, dass die vorgesehenen Regelungen für die Betroffenen, insbesondere für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen, nicht praktikabel und erfüllbar sein werden.

Auch für die Behörden werden sie praktisch nur schwer kontrollierbar und durchsetzbar sein. Es fehlt eine umfassende Vereinfachung und Modernisierung des komplexen und nur noch für Experten nachvollziehbaren umfangreichen EU-Stoff- und Produktrechtes.

Die Chemieregionen sind der Meinung, dass der Erhalt der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und die Stärkung der Innovationskraft der europäischen Industrie entscheidende Kriterien für die Ausgestaltung von REACH sein sollten

Maßstab für den Erhalt der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der europäischen Industrie bei der Herstellung und Verarbeitung chemischer Produkte sind

- die Kosten der chemischen Zulieferungen für das Endprodukt,
- die Verfügbarkeit eines breiten Angebotes von chemischen Produkten und

- der Zeitraum neue Produkte an den Markt zu bringen.

Die Vielfalt chemischer Produkte ist eine wichtige Basis von Innovation. Sie bleibt gewahrt, wenn die Prüfanforderungen insbesondere für kleinvolumige Produkte auf einen Minimaldatensatz reduziert werden. Für weitergehende Prüfungen sollte die Exposition bestimmend sein.

Die Innovationsfähigkeit wird weiter gestärkt, wenn die Zusatzkosten und der Zeitaufwand durch REACH gering gehalten werden. REACH ist so auszugestalten, dass insbesondere auch KMU und Importeure ohne bürokratischen Aufwand den Anforderungen entsprechen können. Dabei ist darauf zu achten, dass diesen Anforderungen nicht nur die Hersteller chemischer Produkte, sondern auch ihre Kunden, die Verarbeiter in der Wertschöpfungskette treffen. Daher sollte vor der Beschlussfassung im Parlament in konkreten Pilotprojekten unter Beteiligung von Unternehmen der Wertschöpfungskette und der Behörden die Wirkung und Praktikabilität von REACH hinreichend erprobt werden. Deswegen unterstützen wir die Anstrengungen Nordrhein-Westfalens für die Erprobung ausgewählter Elemente des REACH Verfahrens in der Praxis und fordern die Europäischen Institutionen auf diese Ergebnisse zu beachten.

Zur Reduzierung des bürokratischen Aufwandes sollte eine Analyse aller stoff- und produktbezogenen europäischen und nationalen Regelungen ausweisen, welche Regelungen künftig entfallen oder geändert werden.

3. Chemieregionen als Wissensregionen

Sowohl Chemieunternehmen als auch Chemieregionen befinden sich derzeit in einer Phase großer Umbrüche. Die neuen globalen Wettbewerbsbedingungen erfordern umfassende Modernisierungsstrategien in den Chemieregionen, um so dauerhaft die eigene Wettbewerbsposition zu sichern. Dabei sind die Entwicklung der Innovationslandschaft und der Humanressourcen in den Regionen entscheidend für die Positionierung im internationalen Standortwettbewerb. Die Ausprägung wettbewerbsfähiger Forschungspotentiale und deren wirtschaftliche Verwertung haben großen Einfluss auf das Wachstum und die Beschäftigung in den Region.

Die europäischen Chemieregionen haben sich das Ziel gesetzt, gemeinsam auf innovative Weise eine verstärkte Kooperation weiterzuentwickeln, welche zum Vorteil aller Regionen ist.

Ein wesentliches Element ist dabei die von den Chemieregionen Sachsen-Anhalt, Asturien und Lombardei initiierte Kooperation im Rahmen des europäischen Sonderprogramms „Wissensregionen“. Die europäischen Chemieregionen sehen in dem darin konzipierten Mentoringansatz eine gute Gelegenheit, um gegenseitige Erfahrungen auszutauschen und zu neuen Formen der nachhaltigen interregionale Kooperation zu kommen.

Auf dieser Grundlage sollen Modelle für die Identifizierung und Entwicklung von Kooperationen zwischen fortgeschrittenen und benachteiligten Regionen entwickelt werden.

Insbesondere können spezifische Transformationserfahrungen von besonderer Bedeutung für die Gestaltung der Branchen-, Forschungs- und Regionalpolitik in den Beitrittsstaaten sein. Damit wird eine aktive Brückenfunktion im Prozess der Erweiterung wahrgenommen.

Das Zusammenführen von Kompetenzen verschiedener Regionen auf dem Gebiet der Restrukturierung von industriellen Altflächen und Chemieparks unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der darin verankerten integrativen Politikansätze ist ein wichtiges innovatives Element, welches zur Verbesserung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der europäischen Chemieindustrie in einem globalisierten Markt beiträgt. Das Netzwerk bearbeitet Themen, die für die zukünftige Innovationsorientierung von besonderer Bedeutung sind (z. B. Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten für Chemieparks und die Beziehung zu Basel II). Damit werden Themen besetzt, die bisher noch kaum Beachtung gefunden haben. Dies ermöglicht einen hohen Gewinn an neuen und innovativen Ergebnissen.

Die Einbindung der Zusammenarbeit der Chemieparks in das Netzwerk der Europäischen Chemieregionen stellt sicher, dass die Ergebnisse der Arbeit schnell und zielgerichtet weitergegeben werden, womit zugleich neue Impulse vom Netzwerk für die beteiligten Unternehmen und wissenschaftlichen Institutionen ausgehen. Auf diese Weise wird eine enge Verbindung von Aspekten der Forschungs-, Regional- und Bildungspolitik hergestellt.

4. Forcierung der interregionalen Zusammenarbeit zwischen Chemieregionen

Der Aufbau des Netzwerkes europäischer Chemieregionen stellt einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Verstärkung der interregionalen Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Chemieregionen dar. Neben dem Austausch von Ideen und Erfahrungen zu Fragen der nachhaltigen Entwicklung von Chemieregionen sollen zugleich Begegnungen mit den Partnern aus Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Politik und Verwaltung aktiviert werden.

Ziel hierbei ist es, die in den verschiedenen Regionen vorhandenen Entwicklungspotenziale besser zu nutzen. Gleichzeitig geht es um das Finden gemeinsamer Lösungsansätze, um den Herausforderungen, vor denen die Chemieregionen im Rahmen des wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Wandels stehen, gerecht zu werden.

Die vorhersehbaren Entwicklungen des Europäischen und internationalen Regulierungssystems stellen die Chemische Industrie unter einem ständigen Anpassungsdruck. Das Europäische Netzwerk der Chemieregionen bekennt sich zu der Notwendigkeit einer Zusammenarbeit mit der Industrie, um die Bedenken über potentielle Arbeitsplatzverluste, Unternehmensverlagerungen und unverhältnismäßige bürokratische Anforderungen zu konstruktiv zu reduzieren.

Ein wichtiger Schwerpunkt interregionaler Zusammenarbeit besteht vor dem Hintergrund der EU-Erweiterung in dem Ausbau der Beziehungen zu den mittel- und osteuropäischen Chemieregionen. Der Aufbau von Partnerschaften zu diesen Regionen stellt einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Beschleunigung des Anpassungsprozesses und damit zur Stärkung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Europas dar.

5. Perspektiven für das Netzwerk der Chemieregionen

Die europäischen Chemieregionen haben den Anspruch, mittelfristig alle wichtigen Chemiestandorte in Europa in das Netzwerk zu integrieren. Daher versteht sich das Netzwerk als Kommunikations- und Kooperationsangebot für alle entsprechenden regionalen Vertretungsorgane.

Darüber hinaus betrachten es die Chemieregionen für besonders wichtig, vertrauensvolle und belastbare Beziehungen zu den Institutionen der Europäischen Union, zu Verbänden und Organisationen der Chemieunternehmen und Sozialpartner sowie zu Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen im Bereich des Umwelt- und Verbraucherschutzes aufzubauen.

Declaration of the 2nd European Congress of Chemical Regions on 05./06.02. 2004 in Halle/Saale

1. Chemical Regions in Europe

Chemical regions in Europe are increasingly recognized as important participants in the development and implementation of policies for the chemical industry on site. They often have to see to the implementation of European conditions at regional level and at the same time find practicable solutions for the enterprises concerned.

The European Network of Chemical regions has the intention to create a greater awareness for the regional dimension with those involved in the shaping of policies in Europe. The big success of the first congress of European Chemical regions on May 21st, 2003 in Brussels, in which more than 250 representatives from more than 20 European Chemical regions took part, has made it quite clear, that there is indeed room and the need for a European network of Chemical regions. Starting from this positive experience the chemical regions will create during the next 12 months the necessary structures and make arrangements for the network to be able to fulfil its tasks in the long run. At the same time the European Chemical regions are asking the European Institutions to recognize this network as a “European stakeholder” for regional concerns.

2. The shaping of the future Chemicals policy in Europe

The debate on the future of the chemicals policy was an important incentive for the regions to join together closer.

In view of the proposals for a regulation submitted by the European Commission at the end of last year the European Chemical regions emphasize the principles already laid down in May 2003

- Health protection of the citizens, particularly of the workforce in Europe,
- the reduction of risks and strains for present and future ecological systems.
- safeguarding existing jobs by maintaining the competitiveness of the European economy,
- creating new jobs by improving the innovative capabilities,
- planning and legal certainty to promote investments,
- respect of ethical principles
- participatory involvement in the political decision-making and implementation process for a sustainable development capability of the sector including the regions.

The European Chemical regions welcome the fact that the European Commission has taken into consideration in its proposals of October 29, 2003 important demands, such as

- exempting polymers from registration and assessment,
- lowering the demands on intermediate products transported under strict control,
- the improvement of the protection of business secrets,
- the consideration of the special situation of chemical parks, and not to provide for an admission procedure at national level,
- a clear reduction of the demands on the report on the safety of chemicals,
- an improvement of legal certainty by extending the number of possible remedies against decisions by the Agency, and

It is imperative for these improvements to be maintained in any further legislation procedure. In addition, the economic effects of REACH must be checked carefully prior to the start of the legislation procedure to avoid negative effects on European industry. However, it has to be noted that important demands both regarding the protection of the environment and health as well as to relieve the economy were not taken into account or at least not in concrete terms. What is missing is a comprehensive analysis of the existing regulations, as was mentioned by the Council of Ministers, the Parliament, and also in the common position. For this reason it is possible that the envisaged regulation is not going to be practicable for those concerned, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises who cannot comply.

Even the authorities will have difficulties in controlling and enforcing these rules. There is no comprehensive simplification and modernisation of the complex and extensive EU law on substances and products. The chemical regions are of the opinion that to maintain the competitiveness and to strengthen the innovative capabilities of European industry should be decisive criteria for the shaping of REACH.

Yardstick for maintaining the competitiveness of European industry when it comes to producing and processing chemical products is

- the costs of the supply of chemicals for the final product,
- the availability of a wide offer of chemical products, and
- the time to market of new products.

The variety of chemical products is an important basis for innovation. It is maintained if the test requirements, particularly for products with a small volume are reduced to a minimum data set. For any other checks the exposition should be authoritative.

The innovative capability is further increased if REACH keeps the additional costs and the invested time at a low level. REACH must be organized in such a way that particularly SMEs and importers can meet the requirements without bureaucratic burdens. It must be taken into account that these requirements do not only affect the manufacturers of chemical products but also their customers, the processors in the value added chain. For this reason the effects and feasibility of REACH should be sufficiently tested by means of concrete pilot projects involving enterprises of the value added chain and the authorities prior to the decision making in Parliament. Therefore we support the efforts undertaken by North-Rhine Westfalia to test elements of the REACH procedure in the practice and ask the European Institutions to take into account the results of this project. In order to reduce the bureaucratic burden an analysis of all substance and product related European and national provisions should show clearly which regulations are going to be dropped or will be amended.

3. Chemical regions as knowledge regions

Both chemical enterprises as well as chemical regions are presently undergoing a phase of radical changes. The new global competitive conditions demand comprehensive modernisation strategies in the chemical regions to secure one's own competitive position in the long run. In this process the development of an innovative environment and of human resources in the regions is of decisive importance for the positioning in the international competition between locations. The development of competitive research potentials and their economic utilization have a major impact on growth and employment in the region. The European Chemical regions have set themselves the objective to jointly work to further develop jointly by innovation and by creating a situation increased from which all regions can profit, due to an increased cooperation. An essential element in this context is the cooperation initiated by the chemical regions of Saxony-Anhalt, Asturias and Lombardy in the framework of the European special programme "Knowledge based regions". The European Chemical regions see a good opportunity in the mentoring approach contained therein to exchange experience and to come to new forms of sustainable interregional cooperation.

On this basis models for the identification and development of cooperation between advanced and disadvantaged regions shall be developed.

Specific experience from transformation processes can be of particular importance to the organisation of branch, research and regional policy in the candidate countries. In this way they can act as a bridge in the enlargement process. Bringing together competences of different regions in the field of restructuring of set-aside industrial surfaces and chemical parcs under special consideration of the approach for an integrative policy means an important innovative element which can contribute to improve the competitiveness of the chemical industry in Europe in a globalised market.

The network deals with subjects which are of particular importance to the future trend to innovation (e.g. financing possibilities for chemical parks and the relation to Basel II). In this way subjects are being dealt with which did not find much attention yet. This enables a gain in new and innovative results. The inclusion of the cooperation of chemical sites in the network of European Chemical regions ensures that the working results are passed on fast and well-targeted, thus creating new impetus in the network that can be passed on to the participating enterprises and scientific institutions. In this way a close connection between research, regional and educational policy is created.

4. Intensification of interregional cooperation between chemical regions

Setting up a network of European Chemical regions represents an important contribution to reinforce interregional cooperation between chemical regions. Apart from the exchange of ideas and experience on questions of sustainable development of chemical regions, meetings with the partners from the economy, science, politics and administration should also be activated. The objective is to make better use of the development potential available in the various regions. At the same time it is also important to find ways for common solutions to meet the challenges with which the chemical regions are confronted in the framework of economic and social change. Pressures from proposed developments in the European regulatory regime and from outside the EU, place a continuous pressure on the chemical industry itself. The European Chemical Regions' Network recognises the need to work with the industry to reduce concerns over potential job losses and company relocations as well as over over-complicated regulatory demands.

An important priority in interregional cooperation in view of EU enlargement is the development of relations with the central and Eastern European chemical regions. The development of partnerships with these regions means an important contribution to the acceleration of the adaptation process and thus to the strengthening of the competitiveness of Europe as a whole.

5. Perspectives for the network of Chemical regions

The chemical regions in Europe have the ambition for the near future to integrate all important chemical locations in Europe in the network. This is why the network sees itself as an offer of communication and cooperation to all regional representative organisations.

In addition the chemical regions consider it to be of particular importance to develop reliable and strong relations to the institutions of the European Union, to associations and organisations of the chemical industry and the social partners, as well as to NGOs in the field of environmental and consumer protection.

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