

ECRN and the European Commission follow up on the outcomes of the European Sustainable Chemicals Support Service

“How can regions support the investment in sustainable chemical production”

In the presence of the European Commission (DG GROW, DG RTD, and DG CLIMA), the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME), Regional Authorities, and Industry Representatives such as Plastics Europe and Cefic, ECRN hosted a Follow-up meeting of the European Sustainable Chemicals Support Service (ESCSS). The topic of sustainable chemical production has been attracting significant interest in European regions, which naturally raised the need to provide a place where stakeholders can meet and share each other’s experiences on their successes, challenges and most importantly the solutions to their challenges. The meeting was dedicated to three types of sustainable feedstock for the chemical industry: biomass, waste and industrial effluents that are explored through the EU-supported project - European Sustainable Chemicals Support Service. The focus of the meeting was on the regional role to attract investments and on real investment cases, taking place in regions already provided with support by the EC and beyond.

The Commission confirmed its vision for the regions as key actors in keeping the chemical industry in Europe and supporting its growth. DG GROW Head of Chemicals Unit, Luisa Prista, particularly pointed at the Commission’s efforts in 3 dimensions: encouraging the uptake of new feedstock that is regionally produced, focus on industrial symbiosis and the need to develop new business models and utilize the potential of ICT tools. From regional perspective, bioeconomy needs to be high on the political agenda in the regions, as a long-term commitment, and to be maintained as a priority through concrete projects, if the sustainable chemical production is to succeed. ECRN has been recognised as a strong partner of the European Commission in raising awareness about the potential of sustainable chemical production and in bringing stakeholders together. Our network has been referred to by DG GROW as a platform where other European regions can learn further about the project and the experiences of selected regions.

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To support the chemical industry in order that it can stay and develop in Europe – this is the vision that the European Commission DG GROW has set for itself. This means regionally sourced feedstock and produced chemicals, as specified by the Head of Chemicals Unit Mrs. Prista.

The drive towards bio-based chemicals production in the 6 regions, which participated in the Phase I of the ESCSS, is fuelled by different factors and actors. Carlos Arsuaga from Circe specifically mentioned in this regard the role of the suppliers, a strong chemical industry and the need to revitalize industrial sites in the region. Within the project, tailor made reports were produced for each of the 6 model demonstrator regions, two of which are now publicly accessible for peer learning. The [self-assessment tool](#) to evaluate investment readiness, developed within Phase I, is also available for all European regions and hosted on the [webpage](#) of DG GROW.

Three regions – Wallonia, Groningen-Drenthe and Flanders showcased real investments that are taking place in their regions. They shared regional factors, recognised to play an important role in attracting investment for these projects, such as

business-friendly regulations and campaigns targeting investors (Wallonia), proactive and targeted branding and shared ambitions in triple helix cooperation (Groningen-Drenthe), long-term policies, credibility of private actors, connections with other EU regions and networks (Flanders) and functioning cluster policy (Wallonia, Flanders).

Dedicated on the valorisation of gaseous industrial effluents (GIE), Phase II of the project has developed a similar self-assessment tool as in Phase I, which will be used to support 4 model demonstrator regions in the project and eventually be available for all European regions. The Self-Assessment Tool will be an online tool to assess the investment readiness of the regions regarding the use of GIEs as feedstock in the chemical industry. It would produce a spider diagram with graphical representation of score in key factors and an automated assessment report.

The consultancy firm entrusted with the project - Ecofys - has already identified the 10 hot spots, where GIE recovery and utilization would be most promising (*please review the presentation for more information*).

In the discussion dedicated on recent developments of related EU policies, the public grasped the opportunity to learn more about the Commission's vision regarding biodegradable plastics and potential rationale behind plastics tax.

For those who missed to participate or would like to learn more, ECRN shares all the presentations as well as a photo gallery of the meeting below.