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**PRESS RELEASE: 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN), 24.10.2013**  
Demand Driven Innovations through Triple Helix Cooperation in Chemical Regions

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MAASTRICHT, 24 OCTOBER 2013

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More than 70 participants from different parts of Europe take part in **the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN) in Maastricht on 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2013**. The Congress is hosted by the region of Limburg, a member of the ECRN. The ECRN Congress brings together regional stakeholders and European policy-makers to discuss solutions to challenges faced by the European chemical industry.

The programme features speakers from regional authorities, the chemical industry, universities and research institutions. Topics discussed during the day include regional policies on innovation and triple helix cooperation and their application in practice. The latest trends and future outlook of the European chemical industry, particularly in the context of green growth and innovation, are also addressed. Moreover, participants have a chance to explore a “Market of Ideas” – an exhibition area filled with displays and presentations of regional experiences, best practices and projects that illustrate the variety of activities taking place in and across chemical regions in Europe.

The key messages of the event are outlined in the **Congress Declaration** endorsed by the ECRN Executive Board. An integrated industrial policy is seen as a key component of the framework for sustainable and intelligent growth at regional as well as at the European level. To develop and implement such policies, it is crucial to involve regional stakeholders in the process – and events like this are important forums for establishing dialogue to achieve that. New forms of strategic cooperation and open innovation between companies, universities and research institutes and public authorities are needed to address future challenges. Partnerships and triple helix cooperation at the local level, together with support for clusters, networking and collaboration in common projects, and exchanging good practices are the basis for a common success of Europe. They play an integral role in fostering innovation and competitiveness.

ECRN is dedicated to enhancing interregional collaboration and cooperation across clusters through its own activities as well as in European projects. We strongly believe that networks like ECRN can play an integral role in providing a platform for engaging with chemical stakeholders and mutual learning.

*The European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN) is an association of regional authorities from across Europe. Originally started as an INTERREG project in 2004, the ECRN has now a permanent Secretariat in Brussels and is registered as an association under German law. ECRN is recognized as a European stakeholder for regional issues concerning the chemical industry and policies. The network represents regions where chemical industry is an integral part of the local economy and seeks to bring regions together to tackle the challenges by exchanging information and exploring solutions to common problems. The aim of the ECRN is to improve the competitiveness of chemical regions, facilitate collaboration between regions, and to represent the common interests of the chemical regions in Europe.*

For further information, please see the ECRN website ([www.ecrn.net](http://www.ecrn.net)) or contact the Director of the ECRN Secretariat, Dr. Hanny Nover, +32 27410949, [nover@ecrn.net](mailto:nover@ecrn.net)