

## European Chemical Regions Network

### ECRN Secretariat

Boulevard St. Michel 80, B-1040 Brussels

Tel: +32-2-7410-947

Fax: +32-2-7410-927

email: [office@ecrn.net](mailto:office@ecrn.net)

[www.ecrn.net](http://www.ecrn.net)



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## **PRESS RELEASE: 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN), 22.10.2014**

The Competitiveness of the Chemical Industry and the Factors Affecting It – 3E  
(Energy Supply, Education & Skills, Economy & Innovation)

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USTI NAD LADEM, 22 OCTOBER 2014

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The 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN) in Ústí nad Labem on 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2014 brought together over 70 participants from different parts of Europe. The ECRN Congress is an annual event that provides a forum to 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 competitiveness of the European chemical industry, related regional policies, and in particular the skills needs and human competences needed in the industry. Moreover, various concrete examples of regional initiatives and interregional projects are presented at a “Market of Ideas”. Beyond policy-level debate, actions to support competitiveness depend on implementation and concrete measures, and the “Market of Ideas” provides inspiring examples of activities taking place in and across chemical regions in Europe.

The key messages arising from the thematic discussions are outlined in the Congress Declaration. An intelligently designed, balanced policy approach is vital for ensuring long-term competitiveness and prosperity of the chemical industry and societies at regional as well as at the European level. This entails addressing vital framework conditions such as energy supply, education and skills, as well as economy and innovation. Participatory and inclusive process is needed to develop and implement such policies. Partnerships and cooperation at the local level, together with support for clusters, networking and collaboration are the basis for 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)