

## 8th Congress of European Chemical Regions

### **Chemical Regions in Europe – New Perspectives for concerted Actions**

At its 8<sup>th</sup> Congress on October 7<sup>th</sup> in Brussels the European Chemical Regions Network (ECRN) adopted this resolution.

#### **The European Chemical Regions**

##### *Europe 2020*

- underline that the European Union as whole went through a period of deep economic and financial crisis which also had a significant impact on the chemical industry and the chemical regions,
- state at the same time that those Member States in the European Union with a strong industrial base recovered much quicker than others from the down-turn,
- welcome the proposals outlined by the European Commission for a Europe 2020 Strategy as a necessary response towards the upcoming challenges,
- stress the need for a full involvement of all stakeholders and all levels of government to implement these objectives in the coming years,
- welcome in particular the commitment of the European Commission to draw up a framework for a modern industrial policy, to support entrepreneurship, to guide and help industry to become fit to meet these challenges, to promote the competitiveness of Europe's primary, manufacturing and service industries and help them seize the opportunities of globalisation and of the green economy,
- support the proposal of the European Commission for a **Flagship Initiative: "An industrial policy for the globalisation era"** to establish an industrial policy creating the best environment to maintain and develop a strong, competitive and diversified industrial base in Europe as well as supporting the transition of manufacturing sectors to greater energy and resource efficiency,
- expect that this commitment is put in practice with regard to the implementation of all other parts of the Europe 2020 strategy,
- welcome the idea of an **Flagship "Innovation Union"** to improve framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs,

- underlines the role of the regional level for the implementation of innovation policies and reiterates the important role for cohesion policy in this field to reach out particularly to SMEs on the ground,
- stress the need for a balanced approach in the European Union to lead in markets for green technologies as a means of ensuring a resource efficiency economy and at the same time maintaining our industrial competitiveness,
- welcomes with regard to the **Flagship Initiative: "Resource efficient Europe"** the commitment of the European Commission to complete the internal energy market and implement the strategic energy technologies (SET) plan,
- underline the need for an initiative to upgrade Europe's networks, including Trans European Energy Networks, towards a European supergrid by also highlighting the need for further investment in the European pipeline network,
- stress the need for a balanced strategy for the promoting of renewable sources of energy in the single market and supports the development of a revised Energy Efficiency Action Plan and promote a substantial programme in resource efficiency (supporting SMEs as well as households),
- highlight the need for reliable energy and feedstock to maintain the chemical industry in our regions and therefore request the need for further research and development of new feedstock generated of renewables or traditional feedstock like lignite,

#### *Future of cohesion policy and territorial co-operation*

- underline the important role of **cohesion policy** for all regions in Europe to strengthening competitiveness and employment,
- see cohesion policy as an important contribution to link the Europe 2020 strategy with the actors on the ground,
- suggest linking the thematic approach of the Europe 2020 strategy with the horizontal approach of cohesion policy to find tailor-made solutions for the developments needs and challenges particularly also in chemical regions,
- underline the important role of territorial co-operation to support mutual learning processes at regional level and to find new solutions on joint challenges,
- stress the important contribution of the European Social Fund in supporting the economic and social transition at regional level and requests that the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund remain central parts of the cohesion policy beyond 2013,

#### *Future Research and Development policy at European level*

- underline the important role of European programmes for Research to promote world class research to move the technology boundaries and to find solution on the upcoming challenges for our societies,

- reiterate their commitment for the European Technology Platforms as an important tool to link up the research community and to steer the Research Programmes,
- suggest to reinforce the link between the European Technology Platforms and the regions to allow more research institutes to benefit from this co-operation.

*Follow up Process of for the High Level Group on the Competitiveness of the chemical industry in Europe*

- welcome the initiative taken by the European Commission to start a follow up process to the High Level Group
- suggest to the European Commission to continue the sectoral dialogues such as the High Level Group on the Competitiveness of the Chemical Industry in Europe as an important platform for the exchange of views and to formulate recommendations for the future,
- underline the activities taken so far by the ECRN to carry out follow up conferences in Usti nad Labem and at national level (i.e. on July 1<sup>st</sup> in Berlin),
- stress the importance of including all major stakeholders in such a dialogue and expects also that networks such as the ECRN will be invited to take part in the further dialogue regarding the chemical industry,
- see in these bottom-up initiatives an important element for implementing the recommendations made by the High Level Group on the ground,
- invite the European Commission to co-operate with the ECRN to develop a screening system of the competitiveness of chemical regions in Europe and to regularly produce a “Chemical Regions Report”,
- thank the Belgian Presidency of the EU-Council and our member regions Flanders and Wallonia for the initiative to carry out the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the ECRN as part of the programme of the presidency,
- invite all institutions and organisations to co-operate closely with the ECRN as the stakeholder of chemical regions in Europe.

Brussels, 8.10.2010