

DISCORSO INSEDIAMENTO ALLA PRESIDENZA ECRN

BRUXELLES 16/06/2016

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues, distinguished members of the Assembly, dear President Ferrari, it is an honour for me that you have chosen to appoint me as the President of ECRN.

First of all I want to thank my friend Karl-Uwe Bütöf for the great job he did in chairing this Assembly but also for his strong commitment during these last years as the Vice President of the Network.

Let me also thank the former President, Mr. Möllring and the Minister President of Saxony-Anhalt Reiner Haseloff who has been President of ECRN for a long time and has always believed in the strategic role played by our Network.

Last but not least I want to show my greatest appreciation to the Secretariat.

First of all let me do a special mention for Director Hanny Nover. Hanny has been, especially during the last three years, the strongest pillar of ECRN action.

Finally, beside Hanny, a special thank goes to Miia Itänen for the great job she is doing and I hope she wants to continue this adventure with us as long as possible.

Now, briefly, I would like to give my ideas for the future development of ECRN.

For the moment these are only personal opinions that I want to share with all of you and , as soon as possible, discuss formally within the Executive Board in order to make them operational and concrete but, most important, totally shared.

ECRN needs to revamp his action and his activities and it needs to boost its image towards you – the Members – and towards the EU Institutions.

To this end it is necessary to:

1. Redefine the mission and objectives
2. Identify accurately and extend the concrete activities
3. Reform and improve the current organization

With regard to **mission, objectives and extension of concrete ECRN activities**, starting from the action plan we have approved today but enhancing it, we shall follow these 3 axis:

Axis 1: Political Actions and Positioning.

Axis 2: Legislative monitoring and Lobbying.

Axis 3: European Programmes and Projects.

For these three axis I have some concrete proposals that I just want to point you out as the basis for future discussions and decisions:

POLITICAL ACTIONS AND POSITIONING

- Emphasize the importance of the “**Circular Economy**” which, at the moment, is the most inclusive UE’s policy for the chemical sector. Making ECRN one of the EU stakeholders on Circular Economy means dealing with some of the most important themes in fields such: Bio-economy , Emissions , Rare Earth , Raw Materials , Energy Savings , etc ..
- **Better regulation**: It is mandatory for the Regions to contribute to support legislation’s simplification initiatives and to reduce administrative burdens for the companies and the citizens by intervening on the Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP) and on the recognition of the China Market Economy Status (MES) .
- **European Technology Platform on Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem)**: this platform, as you know, brings together the mayor European players in the field and (among other things) it supports the European Commission in drafting the Work Programs for Horizon 2020. ECRN should try to become a part of the SusChem board by the end of 2016.
- **European Parliament**: Strengthen relations with the European Parliament, in particular the ITRE and ENVI Committees, both through the organization of joint events and the provision of technical support for the preparation of legislative opinions in the interest of the Network priorities.
- **Brussels Networking**: ECRN must strengthen his relations with the most relevant stakeholders here in Brussels. For example, we have to make stronger our relations with CEFIC. In fact if we, the Policy makers, maintaining our independence and neutrality, we will be able to collaborate as better as possible with the industry, we will serve our territory and citizens better and stronger.
Then we have to open our action to other important EU Networks like Vanguard, Eusalp, Eriaff and other. Our goals are complementary and our activities could be mutually reinforcing.

LEGISLATIVE MONITORING AND LOBBYING

Between 2016 and 2018 the EU Institutions will start working on several legislative acts relating to the chemical sector interests.

Some of the main dossiers are:

- Review of the “REACH Regulation”
- The Waste Directive
- Emission Trading Scheme
- Regulation on classification, labelling, and packaging of substances and mixtures
- Green Public Procurement

ECRN will need to be integrated in the process of drafting and discussing these texts and we will have to provide our members with a constant monitoring service on the evolutions.

EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Unlike what has been done so far, ECRN (the Secretariat in particular) should become a “**PROJECT HUB**” with the mission to provide opportunities and support the Regions in participating in EU projects and, above all, to directly participate as Network in EU projects.

This will allow us to **increase our exposure** – both internal and external - and to **multiply the financial resources**, making it possible to strengthen the structure of the Secretariat while redefining (downward) the membership fees. To that end, among other things, the Secretariat shall be in charge of the Project Council by centralizing activities in Brussels.

Two significant examples:

- **Interreg Europe:** as Mrs. Nover reminded us today, ECRN was born as Interreg Project in Milan 11 (eleven) years ago. A new Interreg Project shall be the first concrete project, coordinated by ECRN Secretariat as pragmatic sign of our renewed commitment and our will to act united as Network.
- **“Erasmus for young chemists”:** one of our most important aims is to support young chemical workers in our territories, both researchers and entrepreneurs. ECRN shall propose the Commission and or the European Parliament a pilot project like the Erasmus for young entrepreneurs but devoted only to chemists.

Moreover, **reforms and improvements of the organization** are fundamental.

Indeed, most of the actions above mentioned, in particular those related to the projects, are not possible with the current Statute, that is why I fully support its change.

In addition to what we have already discussed, I have some more ideas I just want to briefly outline, looking for a deeper discussion.

In particular within the new Statute and with the new legal status as AISBL, I wish we can decide to include:

- To delegate operational responsibilities to the two Vice-presidents, in order to increase their active participation and to involve all our member Regions more and more.
- To change the role of the secretariat’s Director into “Secretary General” because of the workload and to give to this position, always under the Executive Board supervision, formal power to represent ECRN, also including the Secretary General within the official bodies of ECRN.
- To establish a new permanent body: the “Brussels Standing Committee”. This body, free of charge, in my opinion is a working body composed by representatives of the member regions in Brussels. This group will meet on a monthly basis and will serve as a link with the respective headquarters to make ECRN action more operational on what is “hot” at EU level. It should be the “Sherpa group” for our Permanent Working Group, which will continue its normal activities three times per year.
- Furthermore I would like to propose a new kind of membership: the Associate Member. This kind of member must be proposed by one of our Regions and will not have the vote right. Associate member pays a small fee per year (500 up 1000 €uro) and can attend the Permanent Working Group, the Brussels Standing Committee. It will receive all the info prepared by the Secretariat and can use the Network for its projects or actions. It can help ECRN to: have more financial means, to directly involve territorial actor (Enterprises, universities, research Centres, etc), to have within its structure all the components needed for the ECRN renewed mission.

Now let me thank again all of you for your confidence and I want to assure you my total commitment, also as Vice president of Regione Lombardia, in boosting the activity of ECRN.

This total commitment of Italy and Lombardia is clearly shown by the presence today of Mr. Daniele Ferrari.

He is Vice President for Europe of Federchimica, Member of the Board of CEFIC and CEO of Versalis. And I am honoured to give him the floor to close our Assembly. His presence shows the important feeling among the policy makers and the entrepreneurs for a strongest future of chemistry in Europe.