

Sustainable Chemistry in action

On 6th March 2007, stakeholders from the European chemistry and industrial biotechnology community met in Brussels to celebrate the achievements of the European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem) and to discuss its role in maintaining chemical innovation at the heart of Europe's research and competitiveness agenda. SusChem has three technology areas: Industrial Biotechnology, Materials Technology and Reaction & Process Design – all chosen as areas of existing European competitive advantage and with the most potential to drive sustainability. A Policy Group also looks at horizontal cross-cutting factors that affect innovation and research in all technology areas.

Although less than three years old, SusChem has an impressive record. It was founded as a joint initiative of the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) and the European Biotechnology Industry Association (Europabio) with European Commission support. The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker (GDCh) have both been significantly involved with SusChem from the beginning and other EuChemS member societies have helped organise complementary national SusChem bodies.

European Technology Platforms are multi-stakeholder forums for defining and implementing a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) that can support innovation in fields of science and technology important for the future competitiveness of Europe and European industry. From an initial Vision document produced in 2004, SusChem has formulated an impressive SRA and a comprehensive Implementation Action Plan (IAP) over two-and-a-half years of intense consultation with a wide range of individuals and organisations. SusChem's IAP is structured around eight themes of major importance for sustainable chemistry and society: bio-based economy, energy/health care, information and communication technologies, nanotechnology, sustainable quality of life, sustainable product



The SusChem IAP document.

and process design, and transport.

The IAP is now moving from words to action. Framework Programme 7 already contains clear references to ideas from the IAP. A fully implemented IAP research portfolio would cost around 1.4 billion Euro annually with funding anticipated on a 50/50 basis from both public and private sources. SusChem is working proactively to facilitate the building of collaborative research teams through initiatives such as Brokerage Events, the first of which was held on 24 January and a novel Partnering Database hosted on its website. SusChem-relevant projects may also be independently commissioned by industry, via national government research programmes, or through other European sources. SusChem will monitor implementation and work to ensure that all topics are covered within the IAP timeframe.

SusChem is a long-term initiative and represents a great opportunity for European chemical sciences and engineering. Its success depends on widespread participation from all parts of the chemical community, and EuChemS will play its part.

www.suschem.org

Sustainable Neighbourhood

A high level conference on research for sustainable development in Europe will be organised in Leipzig (8 to 10 May 2007) by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research as part of the German EU Presidency. It aims at providing a forum for debate of current research on sustainability which is seen as an engine for European competitiveness within the Lisbon agenda. The conference will be hosted by Annette Schavan, the German Minister of Education and Research, and the European Commission will be represented by Janez Potocnik, Commissioner for Science and Research. Some 900 participants from science, funding agencies, industry and politics are expected and will discuss aspects of energy, water, climate change and many other issues highly relevant for sustainability research.

EuChemS has submitted a paper entitled "Chemistry's Innovative Contributions for Addressing the Energy Challenge of the Future" for the conference program to be presented by Ferdi Schütt, Director at the Max-Planck-Institut für Kohlenforschung in Mülheim, Germany.

In his contribution Ferdi Schütt will address the essential role of chemistry in transforming the energy infrastructure, such as cheaper, more efficient materials for photovoltaic and thermoelectric devices to convert sunlight or heat into electricity, the utilization of biomass to generate electricity, fuels and feedstock in bio-refineries, innovative battery systems, and crucial components for a hydrogen infrastructure. In addition he will present the activities of EuChemS, as the European umbrella organisation for the chemical sciences to address these challenges through its recently established Working Party on Chemistry and Energy.

www.fondadei.org/



7th EU Research Framework Programme

Representatives of science, politics and economics presented the 7th EU Research Framework Programme (FP7) in January 2007 in the International Congress Centre, Bonn. Federal Research Minister Annette Schavan and EU Research Commissioner Janes Potočnik opened the meeting with about 1300 participants. The FP7 for 2007 to 2013 has a total budget of 54.4 billion Euro, i.e. about 60 percent more for research projects than in FP6 (2002 to 2006). "Science and research have the highest priority in Europe now", said Schavan in her inaugural address and "the new program shows that we are determined to do more than ever before for science and research in Europe."

The minister expects important impulses for the economy and additional jobs. A primary goal of the programme is to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of the industry in the European Union. The main topics of FP7 are energy, health, environment and climate change, nutrition, agriculture and biotechnology, nanotechnology, material and manufacturing technologies, transport, safety research and space as well as information and communication technologies. Potočnik stressed that the FP7 is most important for Europe: "We know the challenges, let us begin."

The EU has opened a new chapter in research funding by including basic research, but the efficient transfer of research results into products will play a crucial role. This aspect is particularly relevant for the European Research Council (ERC). The new FP7 is also a clear signal to the promotion of young people in science and research, and a further emphasis focuses on reducing bureaucracy. The new rules help to reduce the barriers and to increase the attractiveness of the programme for small and middle enterprises (SME). The projects of SMEs can be funded in future up to 75 percent.

EuCheMS and the Initiative for Science in Europe

EuCheMS helps shape the political impact of chemistry in 21st century Europe and – joining forces with other scientific disciplines – has become associated with the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) over the past three years.

The ISE is an independent body whose mission is "to be a platform of European learned societies and scientific organisations whose aim is to promote mechanisms to support basic science at a European level, involve scientists in the design and implementation of European science policies, and to advocate strong independent scientific advice in European policy making."

It originated in 2003 with an initial membership comprised of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), European Molecular Biology Organisation, Federation of the Societies of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (FEBS), European Life Sciences Forum (ELSF), European Plant Science Organisation, EuroScience, European Science Foundation, European Physical Society and the Group of European Nobel Laureates.



Photo: EMBL

José Mariano Gago, Director General of EMBL, became the first chairman and Luc van Dyke, ELSF, has been ISE secretary since 2003. In June 2005 Julio E. Celis, Secretary General of FEBS, became the chairman of ISE, following José Mariano Gago's re-appointment as a Minister in the Portuguese government.

The opinions of ISE were notably involved in the formation of the ERC. Currently, the ISE is enlarging its Steering Committee to incorporate disciplines not yet represented. EuCheMS is actively involved in these discussions and is committed to work with our colleagues towards a "Vision for Science in Europe" to ensure effective political planning and financial commitment for international competitiveness in European science in general.

Technology Platform "Food for Life"



Consultations arising from the Stakeholder Strategic Research Agenda have identified the need to address opportunities and challenges for local agri-food industries and for the research community at a national level. Such National Food Platforms are currently being established in Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey and Ukraine.

In addition to facilitating links between national food chain stakeholders and strengthening the links with the European

Platform, these national activities have also led to the formulation of a national food strategy in a number of countries and, as a result, to food research having a higher profile. Such National Food Platforms will be networked with one another and with the European Technology Platform.

Kitti Németh (nemeth@vup.sk) of the Food Chemistry Division of EuCheMS will be responsible for this networking activity. It is expected that this network will provide information and support for other countries currently considering establishing their own National Food Platforms.

150th anniversary of the French Chemical Society

The roots of the Société Française de Chimie (SFC) can be traced to 1857 when three young students founded a club to discuss weekly the latest progress in chemistry in a Paris café. This club became the Société Chimique de Paris and Jean-Baptiste Dumas became the first President in 1859. The Society aimed "to contribute to the advancement and dissemination of studies in general chemistry through its proceedings, publications of its members, awards and promotions".

In 1864, this Society was recognised by Napoleon III as a clarity and ultimately became the Société Chimique de France (SCF) nearly 45 years later. A medal struck on the occasion of the centenary of the Society in 1957 portrayed the former Presidents Jean-Baptiste Dumas, Louis Pasteur, Marcellin Berthelot, Henri Moissan, Victor Grignard and Paul Sabatier.

The present Société Française de Chimie was founded in 1983, resulting from the merger of SCF and the Société de Chimie Physique, founded in 1908. The Société aims "to be open to any chemist" and to "gather all the chemists in France, regardless of their speciality or adherence to academic or industrial world". In addition to its magazine, *L'Actualité Chimique*, SFC issued three journals: *Bulletin de la Société*



Chimique de France, *Journal de Chimie Physique* and *Analysis*, which are now incorporated to four European journals: *European Journal of Inorganic Chemistry*, *European Journal of Organic Chemistry*, *ChemPhysChem*, and *Analytical & Bioanalytical Chemistry*.

With 150 years history, the Congress SFC07 (16 to 18 July) is especially significant, and will be held in the Maison de la Chimie, in the heart of the St Germain quarter of Paris. This event is broadly focussed on the impact of chemistry on the needs of society and this will be developed in scientific sessions comprising six plenary and 36 keynote lectures within the framework of six thematic symposia. The Congress includes the EuChemS Lecture 2007 by Steven V. Ley and three Nobel Laureates among the plenary talks. www.sfc07.fr

Chemical Societies to award Eurobachelor Label

The European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN) Association has entered into cooperation agreements with three influential Chemical Societies, who will now handle Eurobachelor applications from their own countries forthwith. These agreements cover the UK and Ireland (Royal Society of Chemistry), Italy (the Società Chimica Italiana) and Germany (the accreditation agency ASIN, of which the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker and Dechema are members).

From 2008 the cooperation will be extended to include the Euromaster Label, which is now

in its pilot stage in a nEU-supported project. It is also planned to set up a further agreement covering cross-border accreditation, so that the partner organisations can deal with applications from other countries as well as their own.

At present, however, all applications for the Euromaster Label, and all Eurobachelor Label applications from countries other than Germany, Italy, Ireland and the UK will still be dealt with directly by the ECTN Association. www.eurobachelor.eu

Portrait: The Austrian Chemical Society

With ca. 1600 members the Gesellschaft Österreichischer Chemiker (GÖCH) is Austria's largest chemical society and was founded in 1897. Analytical chemistry is represented by the Austrian Society of Analytical Chemistry (ASAC). Interaction at the national level is carried out by twenty-four working parties (seven from ASAC) and local subgroups, while internationally the GÖCH participates in international societies. The formal institutions are the presidium and the board. One chief executive and the head of the office manage the activities of the society.

The GÖCH connects chemists by organising events, enabling the publication of scientific articles and coordinating information and services for members. The journal *Monatshefte für Chemie* is produced in co-operation with the Austrian Academy of Science, and the GÖCH is also a partner in *Chemistry – A European Journal*. Organised conventions include the national 'Chemistry Days' ('Österreichische Chemietage') and international symposia. Congresses and public discussions cover chemistry and neighbouring disciplines of science, e.g. the 'Chemistry Week' organised with the association of teachers and the Federation of Chemical Industry (FOI). The GÖCH also supports job seeking and partnership requests, and offers consulting services where required.

Special emphasis is placed on supporting students and improving chemistry education. Lectures by renowned international experts are organised regularly at Austrian universities and – together with FCIO – annual prizes are awarded for outstanding doctoral and masters theses. The GÖCH also participates in the evaluation of legislation and regulations concerning chemistry issues. www.goech.at



Haio Harms, President, Gabriela Ebner, HO, Erich Leitner, GE

History of Analytical Chemistry

Ever since EUROANALYSISII in Budapest 1975, special attention has been paid to the history of chemistry in the host country. This activity is coordinated by the Study Group "History" (Chair Duncan Thorburn Burns) of the EuChemS Division of Analytical Chemistry. The Study Group has recently published "Some People and Places Important to the History of Portuguese Analytical Chemistry", has completed the parallel account for Italy and those for Spain and for Belgium, the host for EUROANALYSIS XIV, 9 to 14 September 2007.

The full listing of the contributions to the History of Analytical Chemistry in Europe made via the Study Group is available at www.doc-eu.chems.org/underReports/History

Energy Policy and Chemistry

Europe's energy policy aims to be ambitious, effective and long-term. EuChemS believes Europe is ideally placed technologically, economically and socially to demonstrate a successful low carbon economy. Chemistry will play a vital role in delivering sources of sustainable, secure and competitive energy, and in accelerating the competitiveness of low carbon technology. A recent EuChemS workshop in Brussels illustrated the role of chemistry in reducing the European carbon emissions from power generation, industry, domestic living and transportation. A priority action list to determine how research and innovation in chemical sciences will help Europe to meet its targets will be developed.

www.eu.chems.org/Divisions/ChemistryEnergy/Index.asp

Newsletter: 1st Anniversary

The EuChemS Newsletter has now been published for exactly one year. Your editorial team and the many contributors have brought you insights into the workings of EuChemS and hope that you have enjoyed the contents as much as we have enjoyed publishing it for you. Now is the time to review our progress, to try to serve you even better. For this purpose, an opinion survey is in progress at the level of member organisations. Independent of this, your personal views are highly respected, and we encourage you to give us feedback by email at eu.chems@gdch.de by 31 May 2007.

Events 2007

3–10 May, Rome, Italy

ITAUC4, Science & Technology of Biomasses: Advances and Challenges, www.stamitran2.it/itali04

13–16 June, Syracuse, Italy

BUChERi Conference on Polymeric Reactions, www.unid.it/pt/2007/syracuse

26–30 June, Helsinki, Finland

Modern Physical Chemistry for Advanced Materials, kmi2007.univer.kharkov.ua

4–7 July, Vienna, Austria

3th Rgpa, rgpa2007.univie.ac.at

15–20 July, Vienna, Austria

KEBC XIII, www.kebc13.ac.at

16–18 July, Paris, France

Congress of the Société Française de Chimie, www.sfc07.fr

22–25 July, Valencia, Spain

In Vivo Analytical Science 2007, www.cica.es/ian/avsc07/invivo

5–11 August, Berlin, Italy

41st IUPAC Chemistry Congress, www.iupac.org/sympo4/2007

29–31 August, Paris, France

EUROFood Chem XIV, www.eurofoodchem14.info

1–6 September, Leuven, Belgium

XVIII EUChES Conference on Organic Chemistry, com17.org/imbabsg

4–8 September, Valencia, Spain

2nd EuChES Conference on Chemistry for Life Sciences, www.life-sciences2007.univoc.es

9–12 September, Torino, Italy

11th International Conference on Chemistry and the Environment, www50.epj.it/pdiemep1

9–14 September, Antwerp, Belgium

EURCatalysts XIV, www.eurocatalysts2007.ac.be

16–19 September, Bonn, Germany

GDCh Chemistry Forum, Congress of Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, www.gdch.de/gesellschaftsforum2007



Joint Lecture schemes

Nobel prize winner Yves Chauvin delivered the first joint RSC/SFC lecture at Imperial College in December in the presence of both the president and chief executive of the SFC – Armand Lattes and Jean-Claude Brunie – as well as René David, counsellor for science and technology. RSC President Jim Feast awarded Chauvin an honorary fellowship.

A 300 year old link between UK and Italy has been revived with the first Vignani lecture, jointly held by the RSC and the Società Chimica Italiana. The Italian John Vignani was Professor of Chemistry in Cambridge in 1702. The lecture was delivered at Cambridge University by Dan-

te Catterdill, from the University of Florence. The Vignani lecture will alternate every two years between Italy and the UK.

Professor Vrinder Aggarwal from the University of Bristol will give the first joint GDCh/RSC lecture (the Alexander Todd – Hans Krebs Lecture) at the GDCh-Science Forum in Ulm in September. A joint lectureship is also pending between the GDCh and the Hungarian Chemical Society (MKE). Named after Hungarian chemist George de Hevesy the series will be inaugurated by a German scientist at the 100th anniversary of the MKE this year.

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