



Your **trusted partner**  
in the **European**  
**chemical sector**



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 8

September-October 2023

Dear reader,

Our Team welcomes you back to the ECEG's monthly newsletter! Our monthly *rendez-vous* when we share the ECEG's and its members and partners' activities, as well as provide insights on the latest developments in the EU institutions.

Without further ado, there is a great deal to talk about on this brand-new issue, starting from the [ECEG's launch of the Erasmus+ Blueprint project](#), "**ChemSkills: enabling the green and digital skills transformation of the chemical industry**".

The project is to respond to the current green and digital skills needs, alongside developing competencies to produce "safe and sustainable chemicals by design". It will also conduct research on future skills requirements via an extensive consortium network of industry representatives, education providers, trade unions and other key stakeholders.

Rest assured, we will keep you posted about the progresses of this project in the next 4 years and beyond.

This issue is also about the ECEG's Manifesto for the legislative period 2024-2029, the European Commission's 2024 Work Programme, the ECEG's position paper on skills and labour shortages, the ECEG's Board and General Assembly and Steering Committee meetings and the ECEG's participation in different meetings on the European Year of Skills in Brussels and around Europe.

... and much more!  
Enjoy the reading!

# ECEG's Meetings

## ChemSkills project Kick-off meeting

13-15 September 2023, Brussels



On 13, 14 and 15 September, ECEG had the pleasure of hosting the first kick-off meeting of the **Erasmus+ Blueprint project, "ChemSkills: enabling the green and digital skills transformation of the chemical industry"**.

As mentioned in the introduction of this issue, the ChemSkills initiative is an ambitious project whose goal is to **respond to the current green and digital skills needs**, as well as to **develop competencies to produce "safe and sustainable chemicals by design"**.

The objective is to identify gaps between the industry needs and the current education offer as well as to develop new curricula, education, and training programmes.

The meeting was not only a great get-to-know occasion, but it was also essential to exchange with the project partners on the scope, structure, administration, timeline and methodology of the project.

The first day saw the participation of the Project Officer of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (**EACEA**), outlining the European Commission's perspective as well as shedding light on various questions. The interactive Q&A session was followed by a tour de table of the project partners.

The real heart of the meeting was reached on the second day with a presentation from every Work Package Leader of their respective objectives, planned activities and tasks for the next 4 years. Participants were also divided into groups for a parallel brainstorming session.

The third and last day wrapped up and recapped the three-day event.



The next full partnership meeting is scheduled for **September 2024** in **Novi Sad, Serbia**.

Would you like to receive updates on the project? [Follow the official ChemSkills social media accounts!](#)



## “Skills, skills, skills! Skills for people, skills for competitiveness, skills for sustainability”

20 September 2023, European Parliament - Brussels



On 20 September, ECEG took part in the conference “**Skills, skills, skills, skills for people, skills for competitiveness, skills for sustainability**”, in the framework of the European Year of Skills.

At the event, the 5 European Agencies, [Cedefop](#), [Eurofound](#), [EU-OHA](#), the [ETF](#) and [ELA](#) – in partnership with the European Parliament and the European Commission (DG EMPL) – showcased their findings in terms of current and future skills needs.

3 panels examined the challenges and opportunities in tackling skills and labour shortages, i.e. the activation of the inactive population and the integration of third-country nationals. In addition, the event covered optics, such as:

- Skills for people, competitiveness, sustainability: a vision for the future;
- Skills needed to meet the demands of the EU labour market in the green and digital transition;
- Challenges and opportunities to ensure the future is fair, just, healthy and safe for the EU citizens.

## EU-OSHA healthy workplaces Campaign Partnership Meeting

21 September 2023, Brussels

ECEG participated at the **EU-OSHA healthy workplaces Campaign Partnership Meeting** for the forthcoming “**Safe and healthy work in the digital age**” campaign 2023-2025.

The objective was to present the details of human centred digitisation process and to incentivize participants to become partners and interested in the Campaign topic.

You can find both the [presentations](#) of the speakers alongside the [partnership offer](#) and the [video recording](#).

This new Campaign was launched on 25 October at a high-level press conference with EU Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, Minister Yolanda Díaz, representing the Spanish EU Council Presidency and William Cockburn, EU-OSHA Executive Director.

## “A review of the European Social Dialogue: from recent advances to future challenges”

Event organised by the French Association “Réalités du dialogue social”

26 September 2023, Paris

The French association **Réalités du dialogue social** (*realities of social dialogue*), which brings together 400 members from companies, public bodies, national employers and trade union’s representatives, invited the ECEG to its first round table discussion dedicated to the upcoming EU elections.

The meeting brought together European and French stakeholders and covered the spectrum of topics starting from the European Commission’s achievements in social policy and the social dialogue to the ability of the European Social dialogue to tackle issues of societal, energy and geopolitical transformation.

# ECEG's Board & General Assembly

04 October 2023, Bratislava



On 04 October, ECEG held its **Board and General Assembly** meetings in Bratislava, in parallel to the Cefic's Chemical Convention. We discussed:

- Current EU social affairs,
- [ECEG's Manifesto ahead of the 2024 elections](#) and
- [The position paper on "Labour and skills shortages in the European Chemical industry"](#).

Moreover, the General Assembly confirmed the **ECEG's administration** for the upcoming two years.

Congratulations to those who were confirmed:

- **Jonas Hagelqvist**, President
- **Claudio Benedetti**, Vice-President
- **Magali Smets**, Vice-President
- **Klaus-Peter Stiller**, Vice-President
- **Yves Verschueren**, Vice-President
- **Stephen Elliott**, Treasurer
- **Elisa Hensel**, Chair of the Steering Committee
- **Paolo Cuneo**, Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee
- **Sylvain Jonquet**, Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee
- **Koen Laenens**, Chair of the WG Health & Safety and Demographic Change
- **Anni Siltanen**, Chair of the WG Education & LLL



... and welcome to the new one!

*"I am looking forward to my new task and to chairing the WG Industrial Relations. We will tackle the issues together in open and constructive discussions. In my view, a first important topic is the planned reform of European works councils. As BAVC we have already had discussions in Brussels; however, together we can achieve much more. Another important issue is the reduction of bureaucracy. If we do not change course quickly, we will jeopardise the competitiveness of our companies in Europe. So there is a lot to do!"*



**Petra Lindemann**  
Chair of the WG Competitiveness,  
Employment and Industrial Policy

## ECEG's Steering Committee

05 October 2023, Bratislava



The ECEG's Steering Committee also met in Bratislava on 05 October. Alongside an update on the latest developments on the EU legislative files, our members held informative sessions with:

- Lisa Simonis (Project Manager at [CSR Europe](#)) on two CSR Europe's projects, namely "**Business Uniting Talents 2030**" & "**Together 4 STEM Platform**" and

- Sami Nikander (Responsibility Director at the [Chemical Industry Federation of Finland](#)) on the **transition pathway in Finland**, towards a nature positive climate neutral chemical industry.

Both presentations were followed by an interactive exchange. We thank so much the external speakers and participants for their active contributions to the meeting!

# “Mind the gaps: Skills and learning in a changing world of work - European Year of Skills flagship event”

12 October 2023, Brussels



On 12 October, ECEG participated in [Cedefop](#)'s flagship event “***Mind the gaps – Skills and learning in a changing world of work***”, in the framework of the European Year of Skills.

Throughout its panels, the conference delved into the three distinct gaps where Europe needs to tackle them:

- Skills demand and supply;
- People and employer needs;
- Training policies/provisions.

The event succeeded in fostering enriching discussions, sharing research and policy insights and contemplating ways to align VET, skills and qualifications with the changing demands of the workforce and society.

## Ceemet's event on how to tackle skills shortages in the MET industries

23 October 2023, Brussels



Ceemet held a very interesting event dedicated to the question and challenges on how to tackle skills and labour shortages in their respective sectors. Ceemet shared several examples provided by national members of what could help companies find the highly skilled workforce they need for the future.

MEP João Albuquerque and DG Employment representative, Miguel Fernández Díez spoke about their views

and experiences on what were possible ways to tackle this important challenge for the EU economy.

Anticipating skills' needs, building bridges between VET and higher education, developing teachers' training, linking labour and social skills, attracting women to the labour market were identified as part of the solutions.

More on [www.ceemet.org](http://www.ceemet.org).





## ECEG's Activities

### ECEG's Manifesto ahead of the 2024 European elections

On 1st September, ECEG published its [Manifesto for the legislative period 2024-2029](#). The document contains 7 key recommendations for policymakers to reinforce the Chemical Industry and fortify the entire labour market across the EU. The main priorities cover:

- **Promotion of STEM** across all levels of education;
- Addressing the shortage of skilled and highly skilled workers, integrating, amongst others, the **A1 form into an e-declaration**;
- Promotion of the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** within the industry and the public to unlock its full potential for cross-border recognition of qualifications;
- **Simplification of the labour mobility rules** and finalisation of the **recasts of the Single Permit** and the **Long-term residence Directives**;
- Development of measures, including training funds, to **bridge the existing gap among EU Member States on the provision of VET and on up-/re-skilling activities**;
- Alleviation of the **regulatory and reporting burden on companies**.

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### ECEG's position paper on "Skills & Labour Shortage in the European Chemical Industry"

With the position paper on "**Labour and skills shortages in the European Chemical industry**", ECEG highlights the current challenges for the chemical sector in attracting people with the right set of skills and competences.

The document presents sector specific data from the different Member States (e.g. Croatia, France, Germany) and suggests complementary solutions for addressing skills and labour shortage challenges, including:

- **Simplification and effective implementation of measures** to facilitate labour mobility and integration of third country nationals, and
- **Up-/re-skilling of the European workforce**, by effectively **involving social partners** at all levels.

ECEG also calls upon European policy makers to closely collaborate with Member States to adequately respond to the EU's demographic change paradigm and the subsequent labour shortages.

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## Institutions

### State of the Union address 2023

13 September 2023, Brussels

On 13 September, Commission's President **Ursula von der Leyen** delivered the annual [State of the Union](#) (SOTEU) address.

Below couple of takeaways from her speech which are in line with the ECEG's priorities and our recent advocacy actions:

- **Social partners must be at the heart of the EU's future**, as reliable stakeholders to address "the deep-rooted shifts in technology, society and demography". The Commission President also expressed her willingness to hold a "**Social Partner Summit**" in **Val Duchesse** to deal with bottlenecks in the labour pipeline and training gaps in 2024.
- **Time to make business easier in Europe, reducing EU-level reporting obligations by 25%**, carrying out competitiveness tests on new proposals, and setting up an SME envoy reporting directly to the Commission's President.
- **Fair outcome for future generations**, ensuring competitiveness of EU manufacturing jobs.

# Commission's Work Programme 2024

17 October 2023, Brussels

The European Commission recently published its [Work Programme 2024](#). The document reflects on the EU achievements of the past four years, outlines the Commission's new proposals for the months ahead and presents significant initiatives aimed at cutting the red tape.

For the upcoming months, ECEG aims at closely working with the EU institutions especially on:

- The **Val Duchesse Social Partner Summit**, where discussions will focus on how to make our labour market more future-proof in the light of deep-rooted shifts in technology, society and demography;
- The initiative on a **joint European degree** with Council recommendations on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education, and a European quality assurance and recognition system;
- The **finalisation of the recasts of the Single Permit and the Long-term Residence Directives**.

## Revision of the Single Permit Directive

On 12 October, negotiators from the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union held the **third trilogue negotiation** meeting on the **revision of the Directive on the single permit**. The discussion on the recast started in June 2023.

At this stage an agreement has been reached on the scope of the directive, where all categories of third-country workers legally residing in the EU will be able to apply for a single permit and change permit categories.

However, several issues remain unresolved, such as the length of the procedure for issuing single permits and the right for unemployment benefits for people with a single permit.

Negotiators will attempt to reach a political agreement at the next trilateral (European Commission, European Parliament and the Council) meeting on 21 November.

## The “Net-Zero Industry Act” vote

25 October 2023, Brussels

Yesterday the MEPs of the European Parliament’s Committee on Industry (**ITRE**) finalised their compromise amendments to Establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe’s net-zero technology products manufacturing ecosystem (**Net Zero Industry Act**). Rapporteur: Christian Ehler (EPP).

The voting session took place yesterday. The text was adopted by 43 in favor, 12 against and 3 abstentions.

The compromise amendments differ quite substantially from the Commission’s proposal, particularly in terms of technologies and the role given to small and medium-sized enterprises.

On **Strategic projects** (more advantageous installation conditions), MEPs kept just one list of 16 categories, including nuclear power and CO2 capture technologies.

**Contribution to EU sustainability and market access.** MEPs substantially amended the ‘access to markets’ section and raised the sustainability criteria that projects must meet when they are put out to tender. MEPs raised the threshold to a minimum of 30%, in comparison to the previously proposed 15% by the Commission.

**More support for SMEs.** Several amendments have also been added to take SMEs into where MEPs proposed to reduce by 20% the general regulatory burden on industry by 2030 and by 40% the administrative burden for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups.



## News from Members and Partners

### Federchimica's residential seminar

12-13 October 2023, Stresa

On 12 and 13 October, ECEG participated in the residential seminar hosted in Stresa by our Italian member, [Federchimica](#). The event focused on the topics of skills, emerging profiles, and future training needs in the era of digital and green transformations, as well as social inclusion and gender equality.

During the seminar, company representatives and trade unions actively engaged in the discussion and shared their experiences.



## Next meetings

- **30 November 2023**, Brussels  
SSDC Plenary meeting
- **01 December 2023**, Brussels  
WG Education & LLL meeting

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