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Press release: “STEM Talents for the EU Competitiveness Compass – Reclaiming the EU competitive edge”

On the occasion of World Engineering Day, the [European Chemical Employers Group](#) (ECEG) and the [Association of Nordic Engineers](#) (ANE) organised the high-level breakfast session “**STEM talents for the EU Competitiveness Compass – Reclaiming the EU Competitive Edge**”. Kindly hosted by MEP Annalisa Corrado (S&D) at the European Parliament, the event fostered an interactive discussion on the pressing STEM talent shortage and its impact on the EU’s strategic autonomy and global competitiveness.

The discussion also focused on concrete policy actions, including a call to **re-establish the STEM interest group within the European Parliament**, seen as a first step towards addressing the EU’s skills challenges and reinforcing Europe’s competitiveness.

In his intervention, the President of the ECEG, **Jonas Hagelqvist**, highlighted the key challenges currently facing the European chemical industry and emphasised the importance of strengthening **European excellence in education, research and innovation** to maintain global competitiveness. He stated: “*The chemical industry is a cornerstone of Europe’s industrial competitiveness and a key enabler of the green and digital transitions. To ensure the prosperity of our sector, we need urgent action to strengthen collaboration between industry, education, and policymakers. Re-establishing a STEM interest*”

About ECEG

ECEG, the European Chemical Employers Group, founded in 2002, is a recognised European Sectoral Social Partner, representing the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber and plastics industries in Europe. Our sector provides approximately 3.3 million direct jobs in more than 94.000 enterprises.

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group in the European Parliament would be a crucial step in ensuring long-term support for the European chemical industry.”

From her end, **MEP Annalisa Corrado** highlighted the importance of **retaining talent** and **promoting gender equality in STEM fields**. As a matter of fact, Europe risks losing talent to countries where career opportunities are more attractive. This persistent **brain drain** threatens the EU’s long-term competitiveness and innovation capacity.

Moreover, **Women in STEM** were also a key focus of her intervention. Despite some recent progresses, women remain significantly underrepresented in these fields, with nearly twice as many men as women pursuing STEM careers. Stronger EU institutional support might be needed to address these trends.

To conclude, the Chair of the ECEG’s Working Group Education & LLL, **Anni Siltanen**, also emphasised the role played by the [ChemSkills project](#) in tackling these challenges. The sectoral initiative, coordinated by **ECEG** and co-funded by the European Commission, is currently contributing to the **skills intelligence** for the sector, with the main objective of **identifying gaps** between industry needs and existing education offers and **designing** and **developing tailored curricula** and **training programmes** on green and digital skills for the chemical sector.

ECEG extends its gratitude to all participants for their active engagement and calls on the European Parliament to consider re-establishing a STEM interest group as a key platform to advance solutions for the skills gaps, regulatory challenges and Europe’s global competitiveness. We also look forward to the **release of the “Union of Skills”** on 05 March, which is expected to include a **dedicated STEM Strategy** to strengthen industrial competitiveness for the future.