



Newsletter No. 12

May-July 2024

Dear reader,

Welcome back to the ECEG's bimonthly newsletter! This edition marks our *rendez-vous* where we unveil the latest updates from the ECEG, its members', and partners' while offering insights into the latest initiatives from the EU institutions.

This issue delves into the latest developments of the ChemSkills project and explores highlights from the ECEG's meetings and events. From the Antwerp Social Summit and the closing conference of the SPIRE-SAIS project to the ECEG's internal meetings, and...much more!

Enjoy your read

ECEG's Team

ChemSkills project

Recent developments

In June, ECEG (co-)organised two project-related workshops:

1. On 10 June, the “**Current and Future Skills Needs in the European Pharmaceutical Industry**”, with various industry experts, established a network to support the project’s research in the pharmaceutical sector.
2. On 19 June, the “**Green Skills Needed in the Chemical Industry**”, where experts’ insights on current and future green skills requirements in the chemical industry were exchanged.
 - We had testimonials from the BAVC-IGBCE study “[Future Skills Report 2.0](#)”, an AI-based trend analysis on the future skill needs of the German chemical and pharmaceutical industry;
 - Finnish undertaking, [Kiilto](#) on skills needed for the green transition and the outcome of the [SPIRE-SAIS Erasmus+ project](#).

Next steps

The ChemSkills’ consortium will convene on 16-18 September 2024 in **Novi Sad, Serbia**, for its next in-person meeting. Hosted by the [University of Novi Sad](#), a **public conference** will take place on **17 September**. The preliminary results from the first year of the ChemSkills’ project will also be showcased.

[Register here](#)

Our [Future Skills Survey](#) is still open for feedback until **27 October 2024**. We collect comprehensive data on digital and green skills in the chemical industry, with a specific focus on plastics, consumer chemicals, fertilisers, rubber, pharmaceuticals, and petrochemicals.

To stay up-to-date with the latest news and developments of the ChemSkills project, make sure to register for the [newsletter](#), visit the website and follow the social media accounts!





ECEG's Meetings

ETUI Conference on the European Green Deal 2.0

06 May, Brussels

The conference was dedicated to the **climate agenda** and **fears of the EU's shift** from thereof. and critical raw materials has emerged as a central priority.

The [ETUI](#) (European Trade Union Institute), [ETUC](#) (European Trade Union Confederation), environmental NGOs and civil society representatives expressed their disappointment with the lack of strong social element in the Commission's plans to guarantee a 'just' transition, whereas EU competitiveness for green technologies

In its contribution to the above debate, the ECEG highlighted the key points of the [Antwerp Declaration](#), including the "omnibus" approach to regulations and the just transition principles. ECEG also reflected on the EU social partners' joint participation at the Just Transition Platform and the Transition Pathway for chemicals, thus covering social and skills aspects.

Antwerp Social Summit

15 May, Brussels

On 15 May, the EU sectoral social partners representing manufacturing sectors signed the so-called "[social declaration](#)" within the series of Antwerp dialogues. It constituted the social dimension of the European Industrial Deal launched at the Antwerp Industry Summit in February this year. It covers four dimensions:

- **Just Transition**, mapping employment impact and support for industry and jobs;
- **More action on training, reskilling and upskilling** to address skills shortages;
- **Strengthening of social dialogue** and collective bargaining at all levels;
- A stable and coherent **regulatory framework** for our industries.

FIEC-EIC Conference:

“Building the change: how can construction help lead the way to 2050?”

17 May, Brussels

ECEG was very honoured to be invited to the [FIEC-EIC](#) (European International Contractors) joint spring conference, where Karel Lannoo, Chief Executive Officer of the [CEPS](#) (Centre for European Policy Studies), was the keynote speaker.

The focus of the discussions was on the forthcoming **European Elections 2024**, their impact on the new

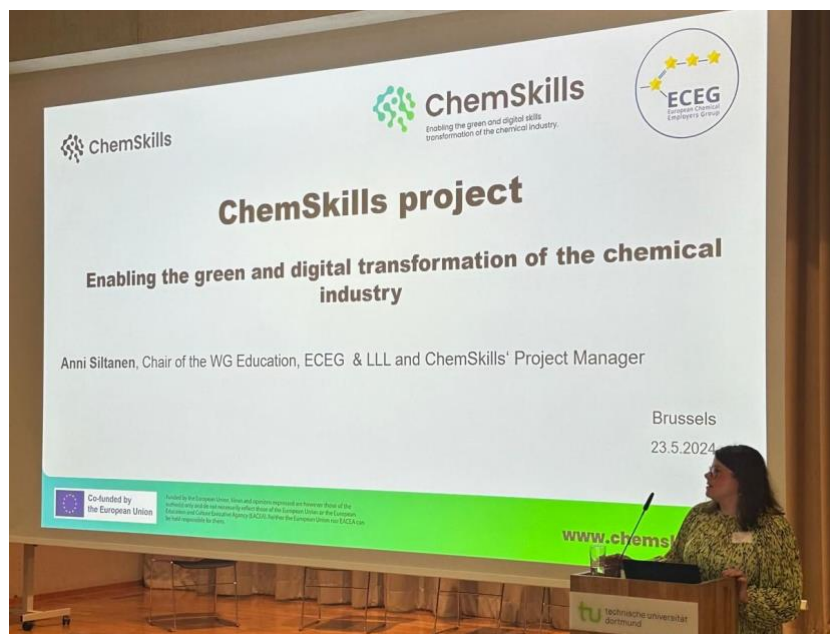
composition of the European Parliament and of the new European Commission, as well as on the **priorities for the construction industry**.

FIEC-EIC presented their "*Construction Manifesto for Action - EU term 2024-2029*" with its 10 key messages to the MEP candidates and to the future EU leaders and decision-makers.

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SPIRE-SAIS Final Conference

23 May, Dortmund



The final conference of the **SPIRE-SAIS project** took place in Dortmund, Germany.

It showcased the major achievements and results of the 4-year project, proposing innovative solutions for the European process industry. With a consortium of 24 partners and 13 associated partners, the project launched the online [SKILLS4PLANET](#) platform and developed a blueprint to address skill-related challenges in energy-intensive industries.

ECEG participated in the conference, contributing to the session “*Future skills – Pitches of other findings and perspectives*”. During this session, **Anni Siltanen**, the ECEG’s chair of the WG Education & LLL and the ChemSkills’ project manager, presented an overview of the ChemSkills project and highlighted its main objectives and the key deliverables expected in the next 3 years.

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Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee WG meeting

27 May, online

EU Chemical Social Partners (ECEG and [industriAll European Trade Union](#)) held an online Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee meeting. Co-chaired by Csaba Szabó (ECEG) and Dimitra Penidis (industriAll Europe), the event included participation of Ms Luisa Cabral, Director for Working Conditions and Social Dialogue in DG EMPL, and Jörg Tagger, Head of Unit of Social Dialogue.

During the meeting, participants discussed:

- Recent developments in **Social Dialogue**;
- The **OSHA Campaign 2023 - 2025** “*Safe and healthy work in the digital age*”;
- **Occupational Safety & Health** (OSH) in the green transition of the chemical industry.

The next Plenary meeting of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee of the chemical industry is scheduled for **21 November** in Brussels.

EU-funded project “JUS[T]RANS LEAD” officially kicked-off

11-12 June, Copenhagen

The project partners [FECCIA](#), ECEG, [Lederne](#) have initiated the “**JUS[T]RANS LEAD**” project to establish actions and best practices for **joint sustainable management and leadership** of Just Transition towards climate neutrality in the sector. The project will help identify measures and strategies for Just Transition and address the central question of sustainable implementation of these. The project objectives include:

- Identifying actions and best practices for Just Transition in the chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber, and plastics industry.
- Identifying leadership skills and tools for managers and employers needed to implement sustainable Just Transition initiatives now and, in the future.
- Giving all managers across the industry access to Just Transition leadership tools.
- Developing a joint Strategic Frame.

The project will last for two years.

WG Education & LLL meeting

20 June, online

On 20 June, the ECEG held its second **WG Education & LLL** meeting of 2024. The online gathering featured the Head of Unit for EU Affairs in the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Innovation, who highlighted the **priorities of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2024**. The WG members also discussed the EU election results and the latest updates on EU initiatives.

The next meeting is scheduled for **22 November** in Brussels.

ECEG's Steering Committee meeting

24 June 2024, Online

On 24 June, ECEG held its third **Steering Committee** meeting of 2024, chaired by Elisa Hensel. The meeting covered recent legislative developments. Steering Committee members assessed the **EU election results** across Member States and discussed the future **ECEG's lobbying strategies and priorities**.

The next Steering Committee meeting will take place during the Chemical Convention on **14 November** in Athens.



ECEG's Activities

Consultation on telework and workers' right to disconnect

On 30 April, the European Commission initiated the first-phase consultation of social partners under Article 154 TFEU on possible EU action on **telework and the right to disconnect**.

ECEG participated in this consultation and submitted feedback at the end of June. In its response, ECEG emphasised the need to clearly **differentiate between telework and the right to disconnect**, pointing out that these issues are already being extensively addressed at company, sectoral and national levels. ECEG also reaffirmed its **support for the EU autonomous framework agreement** on telework signed in 2022 by the European cross-sectoral social partners.

ECEG's Position Paper: *"The impact of teachers' shortage on the European chemical industry"*

ECEG's latest position paper addresses the shortage of teachers in STEM subjects across most EU Member States and its impact on the chemical industry.

The paper identifies the lack of a workforce with adequate STEM skills as a key challenge.

It provides recommendations to Member States, social partners, and the EU, emphasising the "**train the trainers**" approach and the **need to revise teachers' curricula** to align with sustainability and digitalisation requirements.

The paper also highlights best practices and initiatives in the chemical industry, offering a roadmap to better prepare the future workforce and enhance the sector's competitiveness.

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Institutions

Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality

22 May, online hearing

The Council of the European Union adopted its Recommendation on [ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality](#) on 16 June 2022. EU social partners have been invited for a dedicated hearing on 22 May 2024. The main arguments presented at the hearing included:

Trade Unions position on Just Transition

Trade Unions prioritised Just Transition (JT), warning that climate goals without JT risk unrest. They argued that the European Green Deal overlooks social and labour impacts and that the current Just Transition Mechanism is underfunded. They called for stringent conditions for green subsidies and a dedicated EU Just Transition Directive to manage change. Their approach emphasized funding, a robust industrial policy, social conditions, and workers' rights.

Employers' position on Just Transition

Employers emphasised that the green transition must foster a new growth model with a lower carbon footprint. They expressed concern over declining industrial jobs and stressed the need for competitiveness to support growth and employment. Employers highlighted significant investment needs, urging improved investment conditions.

EU Just Transition Directive was opposed, advocating for local analysis and support measure. Social partners and civil society must be involved in developing education, training, and support measures to ensure effective workforce upskilling for the green transition.

EU OSHA's Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025

New priority area: AI & Automation of tasks

31 May

On 31 May, the [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work](#) (EU-OSHA) unveiled its second priority area of the 2023-25 Healthy Workplaces campaign: [Automation of Tasks](#).

This new priority area explores the evolving relationship between workers and technology.

The new wave of AI robotic systems is transforming the labour market. Studies by EU-OSHA's and others indicate that while the use of robots and AI in the manufacturing sector presents challenges, it also offers opportunities in the workplace.

The OSHA's campaign highlights the importance of reskilling workers to adapt to new technologies and advocates for a human-in-command approach when implementing AI robotic systems for task automation.

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The ECEG is an official partner of the EU-OSHA's campaign "*Safe and Healthy Work in the Digital Age*" 2023-2025". The campaign aims to:

- Promote a culture of prevention and raise awareness about key #health and safety challenges and risks;
- Provide practical resources, such as the OSH campaign toolkit, which offers a step-by-step guide on preparing and running OSH campaigns.
- Foster collaboration among stakeholders.

Roadmap on Carcinogens Closing Event

12-13 June, Brussels

ECEG participated in the "**Roadmap on Carcinogens Closing Event**" hosted by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The Belgian Presidency presented its priorities for **preventing occupational cancer**, while participants discussed the current state of **workers' exposure to carcinogens** and strategies for further implementation of the Roadmap.

The event concluded with the launch of the **Roadmap on Carcinogens 3.0**, which will focus on dissemination and implementation. The new phase will run until the end of 2027 and includes 9 EU-member states, BusinessEurope, ETUC, EU-OSHA, ECHA and the European Commission, along with new partners: the Norwegian National Institute of Occupational Health (STAMI) and Ireland.

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Liaison Forum

05 July, hybrid

ECEG participated in the Liaison Forum held in a hybrid format. The meeting brought together representatives from the European Commission and EU sectoral and cross-sectoral social partners to discuss the **latest developments in social dialogue**. The forum featured interventions from **Ms Cabral**, Director for Working Conditions and Social Dialogue, DG EMPL and from **Ms Slingenberg**, Director of Innovation, adaptation and resilience, stakeholder relations, DG CLIMA.

ECEG informed participants about the ongoing [ChemSkills' survey](#) and the recently signed [joint statement on "An Industrial Deal focused on ensuring quality industrial jobs in Europe"](#).



News from Members and Partners

essenscia's workshop on economic exploitation prevention

04 June, Brussels

Our Belgian member, [essenscia](#), hosted a workshop titled "***Don't Give Rogue Subcontractors a Chance! - Preventing and Combating Economic Exploitation Among Contractors***", gathering industry leaders and experts to address economic exploitation and human trafficking in subcontracting.

The workshop featured insights from the National Operational Coordinator for the **fight against human trafficking** and **human smuggling**, alongside representatives from the National Social Security Office (NSSO) who detailed **current legislative measures** against human smuggling.

Key discussions included the psychological tactics used by exploiters to control third-country nationals (TCNs). Companies like BASF, INEOS, and Pfizer shared their proactive strategies for preventing and detecting employment malpractice.

ECEG provided a European perspective on combating economic exploitation.



Next meetings

- **17 September 2024**, Novi Sad, Serbia
ChemSkills' Public Conference
- **13-15 November 2024**, Athens
Cefic's Chemical Convention
- **13 November 2024**, Athens
ECEG's Board & GA
- **14 November 2024**, Athens
ECEG's Steering Committee
- **21 November 2024**, Brussels
SSDC Plenary
- **22 November 2024**, Brussels
ECEG's WG Education & LLL

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