



BUSINESSEUROPE CONTRIBUTION TO ECEG'S 10TH BIRTHDAY COMMEMORATIVE PUBLICATION

A Strong Partnership for a Strong Europe

I wish a happy 10th anniversary to the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG).

A lot has happened over the last ten years. Increasing global competition and changes in the working environment have impacted on the way European companies operate and define their business strategy. Business capacity to restructure their activities has become a central element of their competitiveness.

During the same period, a rapidly rising working age population in some parts of the world and new market openings provide opportunities for European companies, including for the chemical sector.

The European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG) is among the leading European sectoral employers' organisations. It represents companies heavily impacted by today's challenges such as restructuring and global competition. At the same time, it is at the forefront of research and product innovation and therefore rather well positioned in global markets.

More recently, the crisis has dramatically revealed the structural weaknesses on European labour markets. A high unemployment rate at 10% as nowadays is a threat to Europe. It hampers consumer confidence. Combined with the need to prevent macroeconomic imbalances, this should provide a sense of urgency to adopt growth-enhancing measures wherever possible.

In this context of change, we need to manage short-term instabilities while addressing the long-term structural changes facing our continent, such as the ageing and shrinking of the EU working age population.

We celebrated recently in Warsaw the 20th anniversary of the social protocol which created the space for contractual relationships between European social partners. Twenty years later, the European social dialogue has become an important vehicle of social policy-making at European level, based on consultation, dialogue and negotiation.

As part of the EU social dialogue, around forty European sectoral social dialogue committees have been created since the late 1990s. These have gained an essential role in the EU institutional framework, representing a range of business activities that are central to our economy and to Europe's industrial future.



European companies, through their organisations, need to join forces to advocate for the right framework conditions for companies to make the most of existing opportunities in Europe and worldwide.

Therefore, fostering an effective partnership with sectoral organisations, including the European Chemicals Employers Group (ECEG), is more meaningful now than ever before. We value our regular cooperation with the ECEG in the context of the European Employers Network.

Working together, we want to achieve our common objective of restoring growth and jobs in Europe. We look forward to continuing and deepening our good relationship with ECEG in the future.

Philippe de Buck