

The European Research Council: From programme to institution

Under this heading more than 100 participants from academia, European science organisations and EU administration gathered in Barcelona on May 28 to discuss the future of the European Research Council (ERC). The conference was organised by the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE), the platform of European learned societies and scientific organisations, and was held under the auspices of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. EuCheMS as a member of ISE was represented by Dave Garner from the Royal Society of Chemistry and Wolfram Koch from the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, who took part in a round table discussion at the conclusion of the meeting.

As a general consensus, all speakers underlined the significant success of the ERC as the first pan-European research funding activity that is charged with supporting scientific excellence without interference from political requirements such as “juste retour” or the possible economic impact of the research. To safeguard this success and to further advance the development of the ERC as an organisation that supports

internationally competitive research, many of the speakers emphasized that this “excellence only” approach must be protected and that the budget needs to be significantly increased to several billion Euro per year.

However, many of the participants also pointed out the way in which the ERC operates leads to problems that need to be addressed. These include the awarding of a grant on a contract basis rather than as a lump sum, the requirement for investigators to complete a weekly timesheet and the inadequate and overly complicated regulations that cover the recruitment of reviewers.

Another major concern is the legal position of the ERC within the European structures. The ERC is a unique body created in 2007 as an autonomous part of the EU Framework Programme 7. As discussions on the Framework Programme 8 begin there is a clear need to consolidate a stable future for the ERC. In Barcelona the participants agreed that the goal has to be to install the European Research Council as a completely independent legal body (i.e. an “institution”) under the umbrella of the Commission.

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*More than 100 participants discussed in Barcelona the future of the ERC.
(Photos: IRB Barcelona)*



New EuCheMS Executive Board met in Brussels

Luis Oro, EuCheMS President, chaired the first meeting of the new EuCheMS Executive Board at the EuCheMS office in Brussels on 14 April. Twelve elected and appointed members participated, together with invited guests. He welcomed Catherine Feore, the new Policy Development Manager and guests from the European Chemical Industry Council Cefic, Gernot Klotz and Ger Spork.

As briefing for the new Board members, Franco De Angelis, EuCheMS Treasurer, gave an extensive presentation on finances and proposed priority activities for 2011, including a proposal to re-locate the EuCheMS Secretariat from London, where it is hosted by RSC, to Brussels. The Board acknowledged the special role that the professional associations, including the Consiglio Nazionale dei Chimici in Italy, the Asociación Nacional de Químicos de España and the Consejo General de Colegios Oficiales in Spain and the Association of Greek Chemists, play as member societies of EuCheMS. Their views will be important in leading the development of EuCheMS policy. Significantly, there are two positions on the Board for representatives from the professional associations, enabling them to participate fully in decision making. The Executive Board is responsible for implementing EuCheMS policy, managing its scientific, education and professional activities, and for financial management.

Evelyn McEwan, McEwanE@rsc.org

Latest news to Nürnberg

Creating your personal timetable for the 3rd EuCheMS Chemistry Congress in Nürnberg is just a few mouseclicks away. By using the hyperlink for the final conference programme on www.euchems-congress2010.org/scientific.htm not only attendees, but also all colleagues who have not yet registered for the congress will open an interactive programme with a comprehensive set of features that allows easy management of the 22 main symposia, 10 special symposia, the poster session and a wealth of other events.

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The European Association
for Chemical and Molecular
Sciences

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Call to European Chemists

The secretariat of EurChem and the European Chemist Registration Board (ECRB) has moved from Cambridge to Prague. The EurChem database is now successfully installed in Prague. As the new secretariat needs to ensure live contact with the registrees the ECRB asks all EurChem registrees to send an e-mail to the new ECRB secretary, Helena Pokorná (chem_spol@csvts.cz) giving their current postal and e-mail addresses, phone number and any other information they consider relevant.

Requests for prolongation of EurChem registration will be sent by the Prague secretariat through the relevant EuCheMS member societies later this year. Any EurChem registree, however, who requires further information or did not get this renewal notice should contact the ECRB secretary.

Please see www.euchems.org/Qualifications/EurChemDesignation.asp to comment or for suggestions how the work of the ECRB can be improved.

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International picture contest

Everything is chemistry: The air we breathe, the water we drink and the clothes we wear. The EuCheMS European Young Chemists Network, the German Jungchemikerforum and the Association for Chemistry and Economics, a section of the GDCh, organised an international picture contest. The best twelve pictures will not only be awarded at the EuCheMS Congress in Nürnberg, but will be printed in a calendar specially designed for the International Year of Chemistry 2011. *ks*

www.eycn.eu

EuCheMS Brussels News Update

The EuCheMS Brussels News Update provides news from the European Union concerning chemistry and related fields. The Brussels News Update is published monthly. To view the current issue and the archive please visit www.euchems.org. *ks*

Catherine Feore: New Policy Development Manager

EuCheMS is very pleased to announce the appointment of Catherine Feore to lead our policy development work in Brussels. Catherine has worked in Brussels for over ten years, representing a wide range of organisations, from universities to public authorities, and in many fields, from waste policy to aviation. She has direct experience of working in the European Parliament as an assistant to two Members of the European Parliament and was seconded to the European Commission as a National Expert in Urban Policy.

Catherine's last role in Brussels was as Head of Office for Greater Manchester, a partnership of 18 different organisations, including Manchester Airports Group, Manchester Public Transport Authority, Greater Manchester Waste and the Manchester's Economic Development Agency.

She originally studied the sciences before transferring to political science. Her studies have given her an enduring respect for chemistry and she is looking forward to getting to know all those actively involved with EuCheMS, its member societies, Divisions



Catherine Feore

and Working Parties and Associated Organisations. More than anything, though, Catherine is motivated in promoting the vital role chemistry is playing in helping Europe and the rest of the world face up to so many critical challenges.

Catherine is greatly looking forward to her role as EuCheMS EU Policy Development Manager and to furthering the interests of chemistry and chemists in Europe among decision makers in Brussels.

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SCF inaugurated binational prizes

The Société Chimique de France (SCF) in coordination with five member societies of EuCheMS has inaugurated binational prizes, in odd numbered years together with the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Società Chimica Italiana and the Polski Towarzystwo Chemiczne, and in even years with the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker and Real Sociedad Española de Química. These prizes will offer to the awardees to come to France for a minimum of three lectures at the invitation of divisions or regional sections which have successfully supported the nominations.

This year the Award ceremony exceptionally covered the years 2008 and 2009,

and included also the national SCF Grands Prix. It took place on May 20, 2010 at the University Pierre and Marie Curie in Paris. Each laureate, Gabriele Centi (Italy), Marek Chmielewski (Poland), Martin Jansen (Germany), and Robin N. Perutz (England), presented in 20 minutes the most outstanding aspects of their work. The Société Chimique de France decided to pursue this event which provides a friendly environment for short overviews of chemical sciences in various fields.

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European Sustainable Chemistry Award to Matthias Beller

The German chemist Matthias Beller, Director of the Leibniz-Institute for Catalysis in Rostock (Germany), was chosen from 21 competitors for the first European Sustainable Chemistry Award, a EuCheMS initiative. The evaluation panel was chaired by EuCheMS President Luis Oro.

The Award recognises the exceptional contributions of Matthias Beller to the field of homogenous catalysis and its application to the design and practical development of new or improved eco-compatible processes for the conversion of small molecules into valuable compounds.

Matthias Beller studied chemistry at the University of Göttingen (Germany) where he completed his PhD thesis in 1989 in the group of Lutz F. Tietze. As recipient of a Liebig scholarship, he spent one year in the group of Karl Barry Sharpless at MIT. From 1991 to 1995, Beller was with Hoechst, where he directed the project on homogeneous catalysis in the company's central research unit. In 1996 he moved to the TU München. In 1998 he relocated to the University of Rostock to head the Institute for



Matthias Beller

Organic Catalysis, now the Leibniz-Institute for Catalysis. His scientific work has been published in more than 400 original publications and review articles, and over 90 patents were applied.

The Award will be presented to Matthias Beller at the opening ceremony of the 3rd EuCheMS Chemistry Congress in Nürnberg on Sunday, August 29.

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New Working Party on solid state chemistry

Solid state research is highly multidisciplinary, embracing as it does chemistry, physics, crystallography, and engineering. Within chemistry, all major sub-disciplines, i. e. inorganic, organic, physical, theoretical and analytical chemistry, make significant contributions. Research in solid state chemistry is not exclusively motivated by the quest for knowledge but is ultimately application-oriented, and thus has strong ties with industrial chemistry.

It is obvious that such a diverse field of research will draw particular benefit from a common forum under the roof of a transnational organisation like EuCheMS. As a first step, a Working Party on solid state

chemistry with Paul Attfield (Edinburgh, Scotland) from the Royal Society of Chemistry, Martin Jansen (Stuttgart, Germany) from the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, and Antoine Maignan (Caen, France) from the Société Chimique de France as conveners has been launched. Their aim will be to bring together the various sub-disciplines of the field, coordinating all activities with those of the already existing national associations, and to obtain Division status for this newly founded Working Party.

The Working Party welcomes involvement of experts from all EuCheMS member societies.

Martin Jansen, *m.jansen@fkf.mpg.de*

CLP implementation and Reach: Europe can benefit from EuCheMS competence

The European Chemicals Regulatory framework is in the middle of an unprecedented transition. Directives 67/548/EEC and 99/45/EC will be totally superseded by Reach and the Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP), Regulations EC 1907/2006 and 1272/2008 respectively.

New Regulations are more evolutionary than revolutionary, but the impact of an EU-level implementation and centralised control will have enormous consequences on the way chemicals will be produced, imported and used in the whole EU and beyond.

Following Reach regulation, Europe has now an European Chemicals Agency (Echa), to scientifically and technically support member states and EU institutions in the task of chemicals regulation. Member states have organised help-desks that offer first level support to industries and professional users but support is mainly limited to regulations interpretation. A real problem is that many actors in the supply chain lack competence in chemicals management and this is especially true in small and medium sized enterprises. Indeed a great gap exists between authorities' expectations in regulations compliance and supply chain capacity to comply.

Problems in the implementation of chemicals regulations mainly reside in the lack of sound scientific knowledge. EuCheMS, representing almost every European academic and professional operating in chemistry, could ease the transition by coordinating professionals already operating and by promoting targeted university students education.

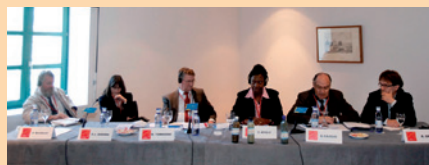
Tomaso Munari, *t.munari@chimici.it*



Photo: BASF



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Science against poverty: Conference at La Granja

January to June this year marked the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. As part of the Spanish government's agenda, the Ministry of Science and Innovation has chosen to promote the role that science and innovation should play in aiding social cohesion and fighting poverty. To aid this, a high-level conference was held in Spain at La Granja, close to Segovia, on 8 and 9 April, with this specific aim.

The conference was opened by Cristina Garmendia, Spanish Minister for Science and Innovation. The first session included a debate that was enlivened by contributions from panelists, one of whom was former Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, who made well-received remarks on the importance of Europe moving faster to support innovation, simplify bureaucracy and use science to eliminate poverty. The conference then broke up into two sets of parallel sessions on various themes, some scientific and some sociological.

One theme was water and sanitation, on which subject Rodney Townsend from the Royal Society of Chemistry (but specifically representing EuCheMS) spoke on work on water management being carried out in both the EU and Africa. This session was chaired by Charity Ngilu, Kenyan Minister for Water and Irrigation, who made a graphic demonstration of the typical quality of bottled water in Kenya. At the wind-up plenary session, it was gratifying that she made a point of highlighting the particular work that the Royal Society of Chemistry, EuCheMS and the European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem) are doing on water management.

The conference proved a useful opportunity to meet people from different disciplines and build international understanding. Above all it affirmed that the answer to many of the world's most intractable sociological problems is more science, not less!

Rodney P. Townsend, TownsendR@rsc.org

Events

19 – 23 September 2010, Gdansk, Poland

15th International Conference on Heavy Metals in the Environment (ICHMET 2010)

www.pg.gda.pl/chem/ichmet/

6 – 10 October 2010, The Dead Sea, Jordan

11th Eurasia Conference in Chemical Sciences

www.euasc2s-11.ju.edu.jo

11 – 14 April 2011, Manchester, United Kingdom

EuCheMS Inorganic Chemistry Conference (EICC-1)

www.rsc.org/ConferencesAndEvents/

RSCConferences/EICC1

31 August – 3 September 2011, Budapest, Hungary

4th European Conference on Chemistry for Life Sciences (4th ECCLS)

www.4eccls.mke.org.hu

4 – 8 September 2011, Granada, Spain

5th EuCheMS conference on Nitrogen Ligands

www.ugr.es/local/nligands

11 – 15 September 2011, Belgrade, Serbia

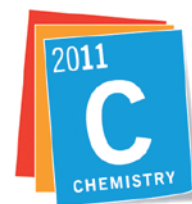
Euroanalysis XVI

www.euroanalysis2011.rs

IYC 2011: Global experiments and regional activities

The IUPAC Management Committee for the International Year of Chemistry (IYC) 2011 met in Sofia, Bulgaria, on April 15. EuCheMS was represented by Wolfram Koch from the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker. Among the major issues discussed during the one-day meeting were fund raising, the IYC website and the overall communication strategy. The programme for the inaugural celebration at the Unesco headquarters on 27 and 28 January 2011 in Paris is almost finalized.

A major goal of the programme is to emphasize that chemistry is a science of knowledge, not just about toxic materials. A global experiment with the umbrella theme "water – a chemical solution" is under discussion. Several possible experiments have been proposed so far but no final decision has been made.



International Year of CHEMISTRY 2011

Finally, there were reports on the many activities being organised for the International Year of Chemistry by the regional associations, including EuCheMS.

www.chemistry2011.org

EuCheMS Newsletter



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