

Personal contact is key to support voluntary intra-EU mobility of young people in the chemical industry

An international conference on “Mobility and Mentoring – Increasing Employment of Young People in the European Chemical Industry” (MMP)-the result of a 2 year project between FECCIA (the European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries) and the European Sectoral Social Partners, ECEG and industriAll European Trade Union took place in Lisbon from 20 to 22 September. More than 100 participants from all around Europe representing employers, managers, workers of chemical industry as well as HR experts, young chemists, academia, European and national politicians gathered in the capital of Portugal in the framework of the project.

ECEG’s president, Yves Verschueren underlined that the MMP is a successful example of how projects, financially supported by the European Union, have tangible results and improve everyday lives of European citizens. “Social dialogue based on mutual trust and long lasting personal relationships with the Trade Union representatives creates a unique fora for exchange and for finding mutually benefiting solutions to the current problems, such as youth unemployment and skills mismatches.”

FECCIA’s president, Roland Leroux stated: “Against the background of suggestions made in connection with Brexit to restrict mobility and foster national isolationism, this project has gained a whole new significance in my eyes. It enables the social partners of the European chemical industry, employers, trade unions and management, to show that the core European value of mobility is a wonderful idea and a vital component of the European and global economy.”

Jan Franco, representing IndustriALL European Trade Union at the conference, highlighted the importance of a strong and respectful social dialogue to ensure the influx of young skilled workers in the chemical sector. He emphasised the importance of a high quality mentoring of mobile workers at the workplace. “A guaranteed voluntariness to follow a mobile career path and the insurance of a good social protection and career stability for the workers are critical success factors for the MMP”.

Deputy Head of Unit of free movement of workers and EURES at the European Commission, Mr Doede Ackers, supported the MMP’s main objective which is to provide guidance to young EU citizens to make informed decisions when going abroad based on a personalised mentoring approach. He presented the well-established EURES network of advisors within national job agencies, and agreed to find further synergies between both mobility structures, such as via communication channels or organising sectoral EURES job days.

Representatives of the European Young Chemists Network, discussed their experiences abroad, their expectations towards the mentoring portal and their future careers within the chemical industry. EYCN’s chair, Ms Alice Soldà presented the activities of the network of more than 30.000 students in 22 European countries, PhD and post-docs (www.eycn.eu). The project partners highly appreciated their views on the mobility portal and will ensure future cooperation.

The project organised four intercultural training sessions for future mentors from different companies in chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and plastics industries, who agreed to voluntarily assist young unemployed from the above mentioned sectors by providing information on employment, working culture, what to expect when moving from their country of origin to their future host country. The project partners are proud to announce that a pool of around 200 mentors has been established so far and hope that it will grow further once the platform is launched on 1 of December 2017. The mentoring mobility portal is a unique online stage which will link a network of mentors of the chemical industry with young workers interested to move for working purposes from their country of origin to another EU country.

The conference is part of an EU-funded project managed by three project partners: ECEG – the European Chemical Employers Group; FECCIA – the European Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries; and industriAll European Trade Union.

More information on the EU-funded project can be found here: <http://www.mobilitymentoringportal.eu>.