

Europe should maintain its position as a stronghold for chemistry and chemical industry

Chemical traditions in Europe can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when alchemy, iatrochemistry and metallurgical chemistry laid the foundations for the later development of modern chemistry and chemical industry. Last century in Europe represented a period of rapid growth in understanding of both the theory and practice of chemical phenomena and as a result chemical training, research and industry began to flourish. Today chemistry is one of the few areas where Europe has been able to maintain and also partly strengthen its competitiveness. Chemical industry in Europe is a world leader — six out of top ten chemical companies are located here and Europe has by far the largest export share amounting to nearly 2/3 of world chemical exports.

In today's world of rapid changes and relocations it is not easy for Europe to maintain her out-standing position in chemistry acquired over centuries of intense research and training combined with a proper allocation of resources. High-level education and public appreciation of chemistry play a key role in promoting and maintaining an innovative and creative environment for the continuous development of chemistry in Europe.

Recently, a report entitled "Chemistry, Europe and the Future" was published by the AllChemE group which stands for Alliance for Chemical Societies and Technologies in Europe. In this alliance the European national chemical societies are represented through the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS) which together with four other organisations is concerned with the development of science and technology policy in Europe. The report, now translated into several European languages, has been very favourably received. In order to implement its ideas the report has been discussed in a major conference, seminar and a workshop. Another seminar was held in March in Brussels on the topic of university/industry R & D collaboration. It would be essential that all national chemical societies and their members, the professional chemists, contribute to the ongoing discussion and that they try to achieve the goals of the report by promoting an improved chemical education at all levels and a better public understanding of chemistry.*

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* pozn. red. viz. URL <http://www.cefic.be/allcheme/>

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