



CHEMISTRY in Europe

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the 50th anniversary*

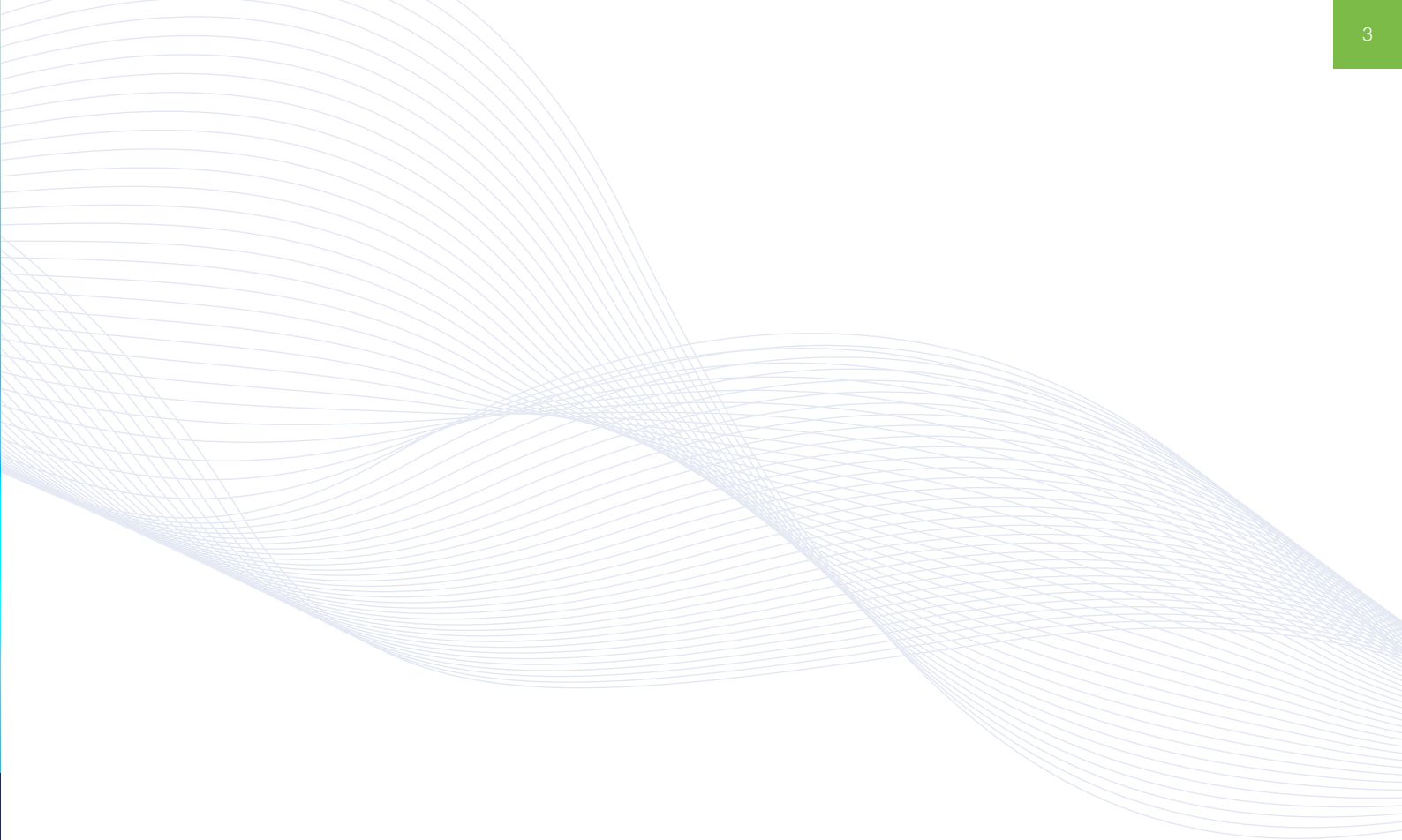


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COLOPHON

Chemistry in Europe (CiE) is the EuChemS quarterly newsletter mainly intended for an audience of chemists. Its objective is to inform the community about research in Europe, to provide updates from EuChemS Member Organisations, and to investigate the latest policy-related developments.

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Editorial

The road ahead of the European Chemical Society



Pilar Goya,
EuChemS President



Floris Rutjes,
EuChemS President-Elect

This year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of what in 2018 became the European Chemical Society (EuChemS): a supranational association of chemical societies covering the European countries and beyond. Many important things have been achieved in the past, but still, many new challenges lie ahead. First of all, EuChemS will further strengthen its policy of subsidiarity, synergy, and solidarity.

Subsidiarity implies that EuChemS will primarily undertake action at the European level. Examples include advising the European Commission (e.g. on climate change, environmental aspects, funding), organising parliamentary workshops, issuing declarations (e.g. chlorine in warfare), or publishing position papers (Horizon Europe, Brexit). Since these activities are endorsed by the national societies, representing approximately 150,000 individual members, EuChemS can make a true impact on European policy. Thus, EuChemS intends not to duplicate the efforts of national societies, but instead to create synergy by stronger articulating their voices and opinions at the European level.

Another crucial aspect is solidarity between Member Societies, meaning that we seamlessly integrate big and small, wealthy and less wealthy societies, belonging to different regions in Europe, into a bigger Chemistry community to address the societal challenges.

Within the present shifting and challenging societal context, in which Chemistry moves between subdisciplines and fragmentations on the one hand, and increasing multidisciplinary interactions on the other hand, a strong association that includes all aspects of Chemistry and has a European dimension will be more important than ever. We cannot predict what the future will bring. Brexit was not foreseen, but despite this political decision, the Royal Society of Chemistry will remain one of the strong pillars within the European Chemical Society. The current COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptive consequences for the society came rather suddenly and unexpectedly, and we are struggling as societies to deal with it. It is even unclear to what extent

the virus will affect our daily lives in the coming years. Climate change is raising the awareness that we need to transform into a more sustainable society to mitigate the consequences.

Chemists are needed to address these global societal challenges, included in the sustainable development goals. EuChemS aims to increase the visibility of European chemists and their role in new scientific developments. EuChemS will also continue to emphasise that Chemistry as a central science is a crucial element in finding solutions for societal challenges and change our lives for the better.

The European Chemical Society will continue its efforts to further strengthen the pan-European chemistry community.

This was the mission in 1970, and it still is our mission today. Better use of social media, close collaborations with our Member Societies, and developing attractive campaigns on relevant chemical and societal topics are among the key objectives to make European Chemistry even stronger.

We are very much motivated, perhaps even more than our founding fathers 50 years ago, to enter the road ahead together with you! Let us jointly work on a successful future of the European Chemical Society!



From FECS to EuChemS: the first 50 years

1970: Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS)



Evelyn McEwan,
Secretary General, FECS/EuChemS
(1996-2011)

The beginning

During its first 30 years, the achievements of the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS) were driven by the enthusiasm and commitment of volunteers. Along the way, we experienced the expanding influence of the European Union, major developments in science and technology and a total transformation in communications. The chemistry community in academia, industry, and government, creating networks and partnerships throughout Europe, responded by developing FECS/EuChemS as an influential voice for chemists and Chemistry.

Wolfgang Fritsche, Secretary of the GDCh, 1970-1991, remembers the early discussions during the time of the 'iron curtain' dividing Europe, East and West 'I insisted that membership of FECS was open to all chemical societies across Europe and not limited to those in Western Europe.' The original concept of a federation was proposed by Eric Parker, then Secretary of the RIC (Royal Institute of Chemistry in London). Together with Miklos Preisich, Secretary of the Hungarian Chemical Society, they built on their existing contacts among chemical societies. The first General Assembly was held in Prague in 1970.

Having no money and no legal status, our initiatives depended on the efforts of the 17

founding Member Societies. Working Groups on analytical chemistry, catalysis, chemical education, organometallic chemistry, and professional affairs led the way, organising European conferences and discussing topical issues. Through reviewing the achievements of these Working Groups, the annual General Assembly encouraged interactions and joint activities. The Secretariat was held jointly, on a voluntary basis, by the Hungarian Chemical Society and by the RIC until its transfer to the GDCh in 1976.

Collaborations

Our statutes, modelled on those of EFCE (European Federation of Chemical Engineering), required us to collaborate with other European or international organisations.

Almost immediately we became an associated organisation of IUPAC. Then, for many years, our fee as an NGO in UNESCO was paid by the Société Française de Chimie. In 1974 UNESCO awarded a grant towards a survey of chemical education in Europe to be undertaken by the Chemical Society in London on behalf of the Working Group on Chemical Education. Representatives of IUPAC and UNESCO attended our General Assembly meetings.

Evelyn McEwan, Secretary General of FECS/EuChemS 1996-2011, remembers the early years 'My involvement began in 1975 at the RIC, by then also a leading member of the European Communities Chemistry Committee (ECCC) created in 1973 with the aim of acting in an advisory, consultative and representative capacity in relation to European institutions. The opportunity to work with Eric Parker, actively promoting European collaboration through both FECS and ECCC, attracted me.'

Publicity

By 1976, FECS membership increased to 28 societies from 21 countries, including the Mendeleev Society in the Soviet Union. Only four countries with a chemical society were not represented: East Germany, Greece, Portugal, and Romania. This was an impressive achievement in an era before email when we could not always rely on the arrival of a letter. Evelyn McEwan remembers the challenges 'To be certain of communicating with colleagues in Italy, for example, we used the telephone.' For publicity, we depended on the printed journals and magazines of the societies and organisations which had sufficient resources.

To share information on our Member Societies, the Hungarian society compiled a booklet; known as the Yellow Booklet, in 1974 it was already in its second edition and was distributed by post. There was no internet then. On behalf of FECS, GDCh provided compilations of Member Societies' scientific events – the FECS calendar of events.

From the beginning we had a logo. Evelyn McEwan remembers 'Wolfgang Fritsche told me that he had himself designed the logo, combining a benzene ring with 'E' for Europe.' We used this design for over 40 years.



Wolfgang Fritsche in front of the premises of the German Chemical Society (GDCh)

Celebrations

To mark our 10th anniversary the FECS Lecture was launched in Frankfurt, the first recipient of this award being Nobel Laureate Sir Derek Barton. Since then, the Lectures have been awarded annually.

To mark the 15th anniversary in 1985, the (then) Czechoslovak Chemical Society donated a medal, later given as the Award for Service. The medal was designed to be a symbol of international friendship and cooperation 'so that science may best serve the cause of peace and function for the benefit of all mankind'.

Membership had almost doubled to 32 societies from 25 countries. Through their annual reports, the Working Groups demonstrated their commitment to promoting international cooperation and understanding among nations, independent of politics, race, or religion.

By the time of the 20th anniversary, celebrated in Frankfurt, there were 38 Member Societies from 27 countries, Albania being the only country not yet represented. Wolfgang Fritsche gave the anniversary address.

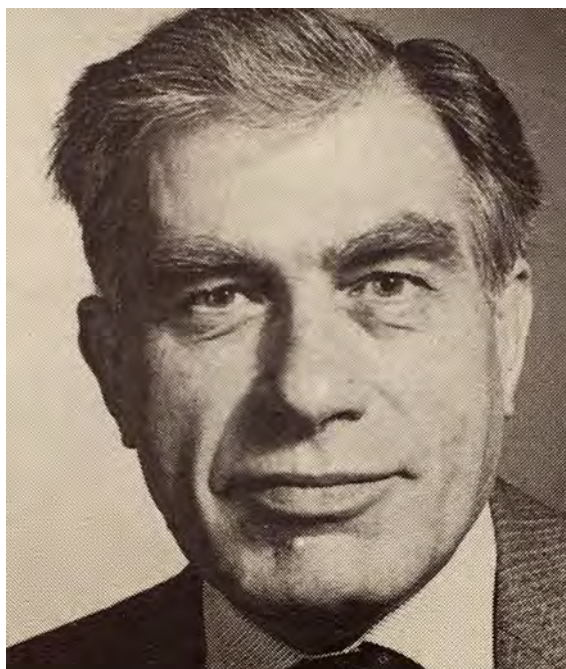
The 25th anniversary in 1995 was celebrated in Prague with an anniversary address given by Wolfgang Fritsche. Two years earlier he had been appointed Honorary President of FECS in recognition of long and distinguished service.

Our science base

The early efforts of our Working Groups were seen in Euroanalysis II, the first conference organised entirely by FECS.

In the mid-1970s interest increased in attending smaller, more focused scientific events - a world-wide trend due to the economic climate. Rules were established for granting FECS sponsorship of events and we were encouraged by a gradual increase in the number of events sponsored and the number of chemists involved. We launched the label FEChem to promote high-level meetings organised by our Working Groups.

By 1990, our Working Groups addressed analytical chemistry, catalysis, chemical education, chemistry in the conservation of the cultural heritage, chemistry and the environment, computational chemistry, electrochemistry, food chemistry, history of chemistry, organometallic chemistry, and professional affairs. The EUCHEM committee, now operating within FECS, organised high-level meetings and advised the European Science Foundation on its chemistry conferences.



Eric Parker, Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)

Expanding horizons

Due to the successes of our scientific divisions, knowledge of FECS spread outside Europe, generating interest from societies in Israel and Egypt in becoming members.

On the invitation of UNESCO, Wolfgang Fritzsche assisted with the creation in 1979 of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS), travelling to Bangkok to help draft their statutes, modelled on those of FECS. Collaborations followed.

In 1982, in response to a request from UNESCO, we considered ways of supporting chemists and chemical societies in developing countries. The resulting network on chemistry and developing countries collected and distributed helpful information while RSC organised a Conference on Chemistry and Developing Countries in 1990.

A Code of Conduct was approved by the General Assembly in 1985. Applicable to individual members of Member Societies, it set out their duty to have regard to the public interest and to maintain the highest standards of competence and integrity. Through our professional affairs Working Groups we compiled reports on the image of Chemistry and on links between chemical industry and higher education.

Change?

In the early 1990s the European political scene experienced major changes. European institutions began to exert greater influence and EU funding for science was increasing. Delegates to the General Assembly began to ask questions. Could FECS have money? A budget? Should we coordinate publicity? What about a European newsletter? Could we improve the public understanding of Chemistry? What about a group for young chemists? How to promote the role of Chemistry in solving environmental problems? Should we create a European Chemist designation? How do we influence European institutions?

To an extent some of these issues were already being addressed by individual FECS divisions and by ECCC. But FECS was not yet ready to have its own budget or a group for young chemists, while improved publicity had to wait until the arrival of the internet.

European Chemist

Over the years, ECCC maintained schedules of qualifications in Chemistry for the purposes of mutual recognition and now, in 1990, the concept of European Chemist – EurChem - was introduced.

EurChem was created as a professional qualification, to promote the mobility of chemical scientists, based on an agreed set of skills, competencies, and training, and building on the approved academic qualifications. It aimed to facilitate the employment of chemists across Europe.

Launched in 1992, by 1994 EurChem had been awarded to 400 successful applicants from 10 countries.

€ Influencing the EU

Many Member Society delegates to FECS were also active in ECCC, including the ECCC Chair, Ted de Ryck van der Gracht, Royal Netherlands Chemical Society, while Evelyn McEwan had been ECCC Secretary since 1980.

From the mid-1970s, ECCC provided input to European policy development. Having no budget and no money, ECCC was fortunate in having support from Paul Gray, a chemistry colleague in the European Commission in Brussels who provided meeting rooms free of charge. In 1990, ECCC compiled the report 'Priorities in Chemical Research for the 1990s' for discussion with the Deputy Director General for Research at the European Commission.

In 1992, in response to a request from the European Commission, ECCC and CEFIC agreed to work together to strengthen academia-industry interactions for the benefit of chemists and Chemistry. Guided by Jon McCleverty (RSC) and David Bricknell (Director, Sciences and Technologies, CEFIC), we prepared a report for the European Commission on the potential for Chemistry research to contribute to the solution of environmental problems. In 1993 'Chemistry for a clean world' was presented at a special meeting with the European Commission, organised jointly with CEFIC, EFCE, CERC3 (Chairmen of European Research Councils' Chemistry Committees) and COST chemistry, the bodies that would form AllChemE (Alliance for Chemical Sciences and Technologies in Europe).

ECCC was also addressing the issue of the 'responsible person' in relation to chemists being allowed to certify certain analytical work in pharmaceuticals; in some countries this could only be done by pharmacists.



Paul Gray (centre), an advisor in the European Commission who facilitated early-on introductions of FECS and key people at the Commission, with Luis Oro and Evelyn McEwan in Brussels (2009)

👥 AllChemE

Through AllChemE we pooled resources from the five constituent organisations to promote chemical sciences and technologies and input to European research policy. In 1996, the AllChemE report 'Chemistry Europe & the future' was published. Subtitled 'Science and Technology to Improve the Quality of life in Europe' and endorsed by Nobel Laureates Richard Ernst and Jean-Marie Lehn, its aim was to influence the future strategies of the European Commission and national bodies. It illustrated the research activity in health and agriculture, new materials, energy, and protection of the environment, likely to lead to inventions of high significance. Warmly received across Europe, the report was also published in French, German and Italian.

In 1997 through AllChemE we mounted a workshop in Brussels 'University/industry interaction - meeting the needs of the future through Chemistry and Chemical Engineering'.

This event provided a valuable opportunity for chemists and chemical engineers to share information on good practice and highlighted innovative ways of matching postgraduate training with the research needs of a wide spectrum of industry. The publication 'Chemistry working for Europe' was issued.

🎤 FECS/ECCC a powerful voice

FECS and ECCC aimed to create a powerful single voice for chemists and Chemistry in Europe. Through the new FECS constitution adopted in 1996, ECCC became a group within FECS to oversee professional affairs and European research and education issues, while nine scientific Working Groups continued to promote cooperation in their fields of chemical science.

At the RSC, Evelyn McEwan took over as FECS General Secretary. Communication began to improve, facilitated by the introduction of email and a website managed by the RSC Secretariat.

At the end of the 1990s FECS was an organisation with significant resources to call upon, our Member Societies in total representing some 150,000 individual chemists in academia, industry, and government across Europe.



CHAIRS AND LATER PRESIDENTS

1970-1974	R. E. Parker (UK)
1975	J. L. Brocart (FR)
1976-1978	H. C. van der Plas (NL)
1979	H. Malissa (AT)
1980	H. Nöth (DE) and H. C. van der Plas (NL)
1981	V. P. Zubov (SU)
1982	G. Berti (IT)
1983	L. Skattebøl (NO)
1984	W. Fritsche (DE)
1985-1986	V. P. Zubov (SU)
1987-1989	G. Jommi (IT)
1990-1992	W. Fritsche (DE)
1993-1995	R. Darms (CH)
1996-1999	L. Niinisto (FI)
2000-2002	R. Battaglia (CH)
2003-2005	G. Náray-Szabó (HU)
2006-2008	G. Natile (IT)
2009-2011	L. Oro (ES)
2012-2014	U. Schubert (AT)
2015-2017	D. Cole-Hamilton (UK)
2018-2020	P. Goya (ES)
2021-2023	F. Rutjes (NL)

GENERAL SECRETARIES

1970-1976	M. Preisich (HU) and R. E. Parker (UK)
1977-1983	M. Preisich (HU) and W. Fritsche (DE)
1984-1986	A. Jakabos (HU) and W. Fritsche (DE)
1987-1988	G. Náray-Szabó (HU) and J. S. Gow (UK)
1989-1993	A. Edelényi (HU) and J. S. Gow (UK)
1994-1995	A. Edelényi (HU) and T. Inch (UK)
1996-2001	I. Antal (HU) and E. K. McEwan (UK)
2002-2010	E. K. McEwan (UK)
Since 2011	N. Hrastelj (SI)

GENERAL ASSEMBLIES (GA)

1970	Prague	(Czechoslovakia)
1971	Brussels	(Belgium)
1972	Jabłona	(Poland)
1973	London	(United Kingdom)
1974	Kesztei	(Hungary)
1975	Paris	(France)
1976	Helsinki	(Finland)
1977	The Hague	(The Netherlands)
1978	Dubrovnik	(Yugoslavia)
1979	Vienna	(Austria)
1980	Frankfurt	(Germany)
1981	Moscow	(Soviet Union)
1982	Rome	(Italy)
1983	Sandefjord	(Norway)
1984	London	(United Kingdom)
1985	Fribourg	(Switzerland)
1986	Plovdiv	(Bulgaria)
1987	Paris	(France)
1988	Szirá	(Hungary)
1989	Gent	(Belgium)
1990	Frankfurt	(Germany)
1991	London	(United Kingdom)
1992	Warsaw	(Poland)
1993	Brussels	(Belgium)
1994	Liestal	(Switzerland)
1995	Prague	(Czechia)
1996	Athens	(Greece)
1997	Vienna	(Austria)
1998	Istanbul	(Turkey)
1999	Helsinki	(Finland)
2000	Rimini	(Italy)
2001	Porto	(Portugal)
2002	Poznań	(Poland)
2003	Barcelona	(Spain)
2004	Bucharest	(Romania)
2005	Nicosia	(Cyprus)
2006	Moscow	(Russia)
2007	Frankfurt	(Germany)
2008	Stavanger	(Norway)
2009	Interlaken	(Switzerland)
2010	Bled	(Slovenia)
2011	Belgrade	(Serbia)
2012	Dublin	(Ireland)
2013	Budapest	(Hungary)
2014	Toruń	(Poland)
2015	Vienna	(Austria)
2016	Seville	(Spain)
2017	Rome	(Italy)
2018	Liverpool	(United Kingdom)
2019	Bucharest	(Romania)
2020	Online*	

From Rimini to Budapest and beyond (2000-2008)



Reto Battaglia,
President of FECS
(1999-2002)



Wolfram Koch,
Appointed Member, EuChemS
Executive Board (since 1999)



Evelyn McEwan,
Secretary General, FECS/EuChemS
(1996-2011)



Gábor Náray-Szabó,
President of FECS
(2002-2005)



Giovanni Natile,
President of FECS/EuChemS
(2005-2008)

The first challenge

Reto Battaglia, Swiss Chemical Society, received a challenge when taking over as FECS President in 1999: “For 30 years our science divisions had been the lifeblood of FECS and known primarily for their high-level conferences. But criticisms were emerging about the absence of a coherent strategy and the lack of publicity. I was told very firmly that many societies felt change was necessary.”

Several of our divisions had independently developed links with the European Commission while FECS had collaborated with ECCO and other partner organisations, creating All-ChemE as a vehicle for presenting a single voice to the European Commission. But this was no longer an acceptable strategy.

The following year, in Rimini, Reto Battaglia led a memorable General Assembly: “Our identity crisis was clearly articulated at the Meeting of Presidents of Member Societies.

In view of the increasing influence of the European Union, our platform for cooperation on matters of science, our original *raison d'être*, was no longer sufficient.”

Nevertheless, as Wolfram Koch, GDCh, notes: “In spite of organisational weaknesses, FECS was a group of dedicated people from all over Europe.” And Gábor Náray-Szabó, Hungarian Chemical Society, remembers: “While smaller societies were striving for visibility and access to EU funding, larger ones were interested in strong representation at the European Commission.”

In the meantime, we celebrated the year 2000 by publishing the FECS millennium project: a carefully selected list of the 100 most distinguished European chemists. The selection process, coordinated by Colin Russell, chair of our history group, having invited nominations from across Europe, excluded several from the 20th century because their owners were still alive.



Simon Campbell, RSC Past-President, (fourth from the right) and EuChemS delegates at the European Parliament (2007)



A new legal status

At our Rimini General Assembly, Reto Battaglia invited the Presidents of chemical societies to choose ‘I asked them what is FECS going to be - a business or a club?’ He remembers one provocative contribution ‘The President of the Hungarian Chemical Society, Alajos Kálmán, pointed out that we were an organisation where everybody covered their own costs – there was no budget to fund centrally organised initiatives. Then the Presidents unanimously agreed that the way forward would be to create a legal entity with all the financial and administrative consequences. But, at the time, no-one had any idea what this meant!’

Why were the Presidents, rather than the usual delegates, asked to attend this General Assembly? The reason was money! Presidents were key to deciding their society's expenditure and thus needed to be responsible for a decision leading eventually to a EuChemS membership fee. As a legal entity and with our own financial resources, we would no longer rely on the RSC for covering the costs of a part-time FECS Secretariat.

Stumbling blocks were many, one being that our name ‘FECS’ was owned by the registered Federation of European Cancer Societies! A new name had to be found and a modified constitution drafted. Knowing also that our proposed legal status would require an office and a bank account in Belgium, we required help from a friend.

Our legal status was to be Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL) (international not-for-profit association). Reto Battaglia remembers one particular comment ‘Our colleague Paul Gray in Brussels joked that a more pleasing variant of this status would be Association Internationale Lucrative Sans But!’

It would be a steep learning curve and Reto Battaglia appreciated support ‘The central role of this intricate process of change was overseen by our FECS Secretary General, Evelyn McEwan at the RSC.’



A new name

Any proposal for a new name was likely to generate controversy. ‘EUCHEM’ was already in use and a ‘European Chemical Society’ existed as an organisation of individual members.’ Gábor Náray-Szabó recollects his input to the debate ‘I was keen to include the term molecular since I believe that Chemistry is the science of molecules and we needed to demonstrate our interest in this field.’

Our new acronym ‘EuChemS’ emerged from a brainstorming session led by Reto Battaglia, the ‘M’ indicating our role in promoting molecular sciences. Extensive consultation and some opposition followed before the General Assembly in Bucharest in 2004 gave its approval. Fortunately, our influential Division of Analytical Chemistry recorded its approval of EuChemS as a more self-explanatory acronym. We seldom used the full name, European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences, which satisfied the parameters at the time. Our new name, registered in Belgium, was announced in the Royal Gazette in March 2006.

Soon after, thanks to the efforts of Ivano Bertini, who believed that biochemistry should have greater prominence within EuChemS, we established our Division of Chemistry for Life Sciences.



First European Chemistry Congress organised in a tent



Giovanni Natile, Ulrich Schubert, Evelyn McEwan, Luis Oro, Reto Battaglia in Vienna (2011)

An office in Brussels

Having no financial resources or staff in Brussels, how could we navigate a path through the bureaucracy? Evelyn McEwan remembers 'Through our long-standing partnership with CEFIC, our friends there were keen to provide all the assistance we needed.'

As well as putting us in touch with lawyers and the bank, they offered office space and a contact person in their headquarters, enabling us to fulfil the requirements for a new legal status. I was relieved when the lawyer received permission for our new statutes to be in French, not Flemish, enabling me to ensure the accuracy of the new translation.' None of this was free, though.

The European Chemistry Congress

The second decision made by the Presidents at the General Assembly in 2000 was to mount a European Chemistry Congress. Gábor Náray-Szabó took over as FECS President after the 2002 General Assembly in Poznan. He was aware of the urgent need for a commitment to organise a large-scale Congress 'I thought the Hungarian Chemical Society should take this opportunity and, as its President, I signed up for the job. It would be in Budapest in 2006. We had an ally, the father of the buckyball, the Nobel Laureate Sir Harry Kroto. Another Nobel Laureate devoted to our enterprise was Jean-Marie Lehn. With their support we invited six Nobel Laureates, Paul Crutzen, George Olah, John Walker, Karl Wüthrich, Ahmed Zewail and Jean-Marie Lehn himself, to deliver plenary lectures.'

Money matters caused some tension, as Gábor Náray-Szabó remembers 'Since we could not estimate the number of paying participants, we offered to pay the costs of plenary speakers only.' He also found a money saving opportunity, 'I agreed to hire a large tent as the venue for plenary events. This was August and everything seemed perfect until the weather suddenly deteriorated and became really quite windy. The tent resisted the wind but emitted awesome noises during my closing speech.'

Our first European Chemistry Congress finished on a high, having attracted 2,300 participants from 57 countries and generating a considerable surplus, shared between the Hungarian Chemical Society and EuCheMS.

The second European Chemistry Congress, held in Torino in 2008, attracted over 2,000 participants from 57 countries. Giovanni Natile, SCI, who took over as EuCheMS President in 2005, recalls some initiatives 'We delivered our first lectures to enhance the public image of Chemistry and held a job fair to facilitate contact between exhibiting companies and conference participants.'

Young chemists

The Budapest Congress was notable for the involvement of young chemists. The European Young Chemists' Award was launched with great success; over 100 candidates under 35 years of age applied, with 14 young chemists being selected to give presentations and medals being awarded. Giovanni Natile remembers 'The talks from these young scientists exceeded anyone's expectations.' The Congress also saw the launch of the European Young Chemists' Network which continues to flourish as our official youth Division.



Reto Battaglia, Gábor Náray Szabó, Giovanni Natile, Evelyn McEwan in Belgrade (2011)

Publicity

The increasing influence of the internet was another trigger for change; many people do not remember a time without it. We acknowledged that communication was not our strength. Wolfram Koch recollects 'The majority of the members of the national chemical societies didn't have a clue that EuCheMS existed, let alone what it was.' Fortunately, GDCh took the lead by publishing and distributing a regular EuCheMS Newsletter produced by the GDCh headquarters from 2006-2016, until EuChemS headquarters in Brussels took over.

Also, Wolfram Koch made plans to migrate our website from the RSC, to become more functional.

With minor modification, our existing logo incorporated our new acronym while versions were created for each Division.

Giovanni Natile recalls the closing remarks at the Nicosia General Assembly in 2005, defining our mission 'Chemistry, although at the core of human progress, is not sufficiently visible to members of the public concerned about the high rate of technology-driven dissipation of earth's resources and the increase in pollutants in the environment. Society's increased demand for goods and services is responsible for the pollution and depletion of our natural resources – not Chemistry. Chemistry can help limit the use of non-renewable resources and reduce the production of pollutants. As EuCheMS, we will promote an innovative, sustainable, safe and socially responsible Chemistry.'

Our vision - to be a single voice for chemical and molecular sciences in Europe, presenting Chemistry as an essential and indispensable provider of solutions to global challenges - was widely publicised through our new communication channels.

At the time, EuCheMS had 50 Member Societies in 36 countries, together representing over 150,000 individual chemists/chemical scientists.

Money!

We needed money. The charge for our office address in Brussels was to be covered by subscription income, we would pay for the increasing travel costs of our President to represent EuCheMS in Brussels and contribute to several initiatives. But change had to be gradual.

The purchasing power of the euro, or its equivalent, varied significantly from country to country. How could we devise a system of subscription rates acceptable to all? Reto Battaglia had the answer 'The initial subscription will be equivalent to one beer per year for each member.' Our solution to the problem of differences in purchasing power was to apply a multiplier, based on German data, when calculating Member Society subscriptions.

Most contributions towards our new initiatives were still voluntary; the costs of the EuCheMS Newsletter and the EU policy consultant were met by GDCh and RSC with contributions from the Société Française de Chimie and the Società Chimica Italiana (SCI).

In 2006 our new budget showed voluntary contributions amounting to 80% of our costs, decreasing to about 40% in 2008. For the EuCheMS Secretariat, a percentage of Evelyn McEwan's role at RSC was allocated, together with temporary help for invoicing, financial record keeping and audit preparation as well as website updating, office overheads, etc. Understandably, there was some inability to pay, leading to discussions about ways of avoiding the removal of societies for non-payment. Our first Treasurer was José Empis, Sociedade Portuguesa de Quimica.

The most important resource available to EuCheMS continued to be the support of our 50 Member Society and their individual members.

Policy development

With our input, AllChemE prepared the report 'Chemistry in the European Research Area - Science and Technology to sustain Europe's future' in response to the Communication by the then EU Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin in 2000. Following the AllChemE meeting with the Commissioner in 2002 and related workshops hosted by CEFIC, our views on issues including nanotechnology and food safety were incorporated in the next Framework Programme.

Our first policy consultant was soon appointed and Evelyn McEwan oversaw the work of Glenn Vaughan and his successors, supporting our initiative to provide decision makers and opinion formers in the European Commission and Parliament with independent views based on the best available scientific knowledge. Our first major event was a meeting with MEPs, including Jerzy Buzek MEP, later President of the Parliament. Chaired by Wolfram Koch and with a talk by Sir Simon Campbell, RSC, the event presented our support for the proposed European Research Council and the role of chemical and molecular sciences.



Launch of the European Sustainable Chemistry Award (2010)

Partnerships

At EU level, partnerships continued to be essential for our success. At national level, some rivalries existed. Wolfram Koch explains 'The successful launch of a family of European Chemistry journals by a number of FECS Member Society, in cooperation with the former GDCh owned publisher, brought the participating societies closer together. However, the RSC decided not to join, continuing instead to develop its own publishing business.'

After 30 years, ECCC activities were subsumed into EuCheMS in 2002, with a new subgroup ProChemE being established, chaired by Sergio Facchetti, Consiglio Nazionale dei Chimici. The European Chemist Registration Board (ECBR) continued awarding the designation European Chemist under the auspices of EuCheMS.

SusChem, the European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry, was evolving. European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN) became an independent association, developing Eurolabels in Chemistry endorsed by the European Commission. While developing these newer collaborations, we continued to engage with IUPAC, FACS and ACS, welcoming them at our General Assemblies.

★ More success

At the Moscow General Assembly in 2006, Giovanni Natile remembers the concluding remarks being given under the heading 'Celebrating our success and actively promoting the achievements of EuCheMS'.

During Giovanni Natile's Presidency, we continued to expand EuCheMS horizons, publishing 'Ethical Guidelines for publication in Journals and Reviews' and two publications aimed at EU policy makers: 'Chemistry and Energy – the role of the chemical sciences in European energy policy' and 'Sustainable water: the role of the chemical sciences'.

We held EuCheMS lectures on molecular gastronomy and a conference 'In Vino Analytica Scientia' in Melbourne, Australia, while a new Division of Organic Chemistry, chaired by Jay Siegel, Swiss Chemical Society, brought to 17 the number of divisions. Our General Assembly in Frankfurt in 2007, hosted by GDCh, welcomed over 70 delegates.

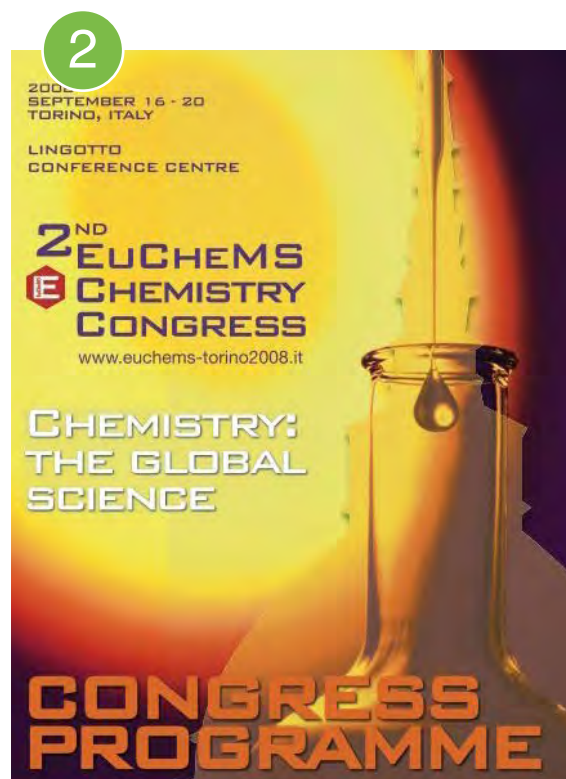
In Stavanger in 2008, Giovanni Natile handed over the Presidency to Luis Oro, Real Sociedad Española de Química. Evelyn McEwan continued as General Secretary until her retirement from RSC in 2011. Wolfram Koch continues to be actively involved in influencing EuCheMS.

Looking back at these eventful years, 2000-2008, we can see that the transformation from FECS to EuCheMS was a great achievement.



Vincenzo Balzani (SCI), Richard Pike (RSC), Wolfram Koch (GDCh), Pia Locatelli (MEP) and Giovanni Natile (EuCheMS) discussed Chemistry and Energy at a meeting in Brussels (2007)

EUROPEAN CHEMISTRY CONGRESSES

1st European Chemistry Congress3rd EuCheMS Chemistry Congress5th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress7th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress2nd EuCheMS Chemistry Congress4th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress6th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress8th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress

Divisions and Working Parties

We have asked our devoted Chairs to recall a certain milestone of their Professional Network, to reflect on anecdotes or some of the past issues, and to share their personal point of view concerning their Professional Network. Read more on what motivated them and inspired them to join EuChemS and learn about many other experiences over the years of their terms. These are their memories...

Division of Analytical Chemistry (DAC)



Slavica Ražić,
DAC Chair

Twelve Member Societies from 8 countries were represented on the inaugural meeting of Working Party on Analytical Chemistry (WPAC) in Frankfurt, 1972. This was a result of great efforts made in previous years to establish contacts between European Chemical Societies. Auke Dijkstra (The Netherlands) was elected the first Chairman.

One of the main activities of WPAC was organisation of conference on Analytical Chemistry. The Federation (FECS) was founded during the time of preparation of the Euroanalysis I, which took place in 1972 in Heidelberg (Germany), as FECS sponsored event. Wonderful platform for the exchange of knowledge and for discovering new challenges in Analytical Chemistry.

The WPAC was upgraded into a Division of Analytical Chemistry (DAC) on the FECS meeting in Athens (Greece) in 1996. More about history of WPAC - now the DAC - the readers of this article can find and enjoy in book published on occasion of 25th anniversary, by D.T. Burns et al.¹

G. Santayana said "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it". The repetition is good in analytical terms, but in general we wish more, to feel enthusiastic enough for a leap into the future. Are we ready? Well, we are doing our best and some future generations will estimate our actions and accomplishments like we do with our past.

The power of Analytics in Science. I like this syntagma. Powerful, indeed...



Reiner Salzer

At times when the Division of Analytical Chemistry (DAC) was still a Working Party, it regularly contributed topics on training in Analytical Chemistry to Euroanalysis conferences. Attractive Symposia Education at Euroanalysis conferences covered various topics such as development of course plans for Analytical Chemistry, new didactic approaches, and opportunities for online learning.

At the Symposium Education of Euroanalysis XIV in Antwerp in 2007, the first two speakers came from Moscow: T. Shekhovtsova, from Moscow (Russia) and P. R. Griffiths, from Moscow (Idaho in the USA). Peter explained how the more than 700 years younger Moscow (Idaho) got its name:

The first five settlers could not agree on a name and asked the postmaster to choose a name. He chose Moscow. It remains disputed whether the postmaster had roots in Moscow (Russia) or Moscow (Pennsylvania) or Moscow (Iowa) or he had no Russian roots at all.



Dinner after the Symposium Education in the Opera Restaurant in Antwerp

Many of the lectures delivered at Education Symposia were later published in the ABCs of Education and Professional Development in Analytical Science column in Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry, e.g. T. Shekhovtsova, vol. 410 (2018) 3917-3924 and P. R. Griffiths, vol. 391 (2008) 875.



42nd DAC annual meeting as joined event to Euroanalysis XVI, Belgrade, 2011

¹ 25 Years of the Working Party on Analytical Chemistry of the Federation of European Chemical Societies. Eds. D.T. Burns, A. Gogala, H. Malissa and L. Niinistö

Division of Chemical Education (DivCEd)



Rachel Mamlok-Naaman,
DivCEd Chair

I joined the Division of Chemical Education in order to try to contribute to Chemistry education in Europe, based on my expertise as a Chemistry researcher and an educator. In Israel, I am the Chair of the National Centre of Chemistry Teachers and I served as the Chair of the Chemistry group in the Department of Science Teaching at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

I am sure that sharing ideas and models among the partners and referring to teaching and learning Chemistry in high schools has a priceless value to enhancing and promoting Chemistry education.

As part of our duty in our Division, we should collaborate with other Chemistry divisions, in order to encourage Chemistry researchers to advise and maybe take part in its activities. I believe that collaborations between policy makers, Chemistry educators and Chemistry teachers have a great potential in improving teaching and student learning in Chemistry classrooms, which is an important goal. This issue is international and is constantly researched.

I was excited to be appointed as the Chair of the Division, as I believe that I have been able and will still be able to accomplish the above goals, despite the difficult pandemic situation.

Division of Chemistry and the Environment (DCE)



Ioannis Katsoyiannis,
DCE Chair

The idea of forming a Working Party (later a Division) dealing with Environmental Chemistry was adopted by the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS) at its General Assembly in Helsinki on 11th June 1976.

The initiative came from Professor Dr. C. Trojanowsky, who was the first Chair of the Division and convened the first meeting held on 8th December 1976 in Paris. C. Trojanowsky was succeeded by G. Dickes (1985-1990), A. Hackl (1991-1993), G. Mihályi (1994-1996), A. A. Jensen (1997-2002), P. Garrigues (2003-2008), W. Giger (2009-2014), S. Luis (2015-2017) and the current Chair, I. Katsoyiannis (2018-present).



Traditional photograph of delegates, who participated in the DCE meeting in 1999, held in Bordeaux (France)

The DCE meets twice a year and has 38 members who are the delegates of 38 chemical societies in 35 countries. The mission and the main objectives of the Division are:

- to represent EuChemS in matters concerning the environment;
- to contribute to the advancement of Environmental Chemistry in Europe;
- to identify important areas in science, technology, and other human activities relevant to Chemistry and the environment;

During these conferences, the Division awards regularly the DCE-Life-Long Achievement Award to a scientist who has played a pivotal role in the development of important scientific topics within Environmental Chemistry. Furthermore, since 1997, the official scientific publication and communication tool of DCE is the peer review scientific journal 'Environmental Science and Pollution Research' (ESPR, published by SpringerNature). In addition to its broad scientific publication profile, ESPR publishes summaries of DCE meetings, reports and selected papers from our international conferences, special articles on environmental education in our member countries written by committee members and, from time to time, articles explaining the role and development of the Division. Editor in chief of ESPR is Professor Philippe Garrigues from the University of Bordeaux (France), member and previous Chair of the Division, and many DCE members are active as topic editors.

- to encourage co-operation between various Professional Networks within Chemistry, mainly with the EuChemS Divisions of Analytical and Green Chemistry and with international organisations.

DCE is organising since 1980 the biennial International Conference on Chemistry and the Environment (ICCE). The first took place in Paris (France), in 1980, and 17th ICCE took place in Thessaloniki (Greece) in 2019.



Traditional photograph of delegates, who participated in the DCE meeting, held in Warsaw (Poland) in 2019

Division of Computational and Theoretical Chemistry (DCTC)



Péter Szalay,
DCTC Chair

The first milestone was the foundation of the Working Party of Computational Chemistry in 1988 under the chairmanship of Fernando Bernardi. He was followed by Gábor Náray-Szabó, who, as the general secretary of FECS in 1987-1988, played an important role in the early discussions and the resulting foundation of the WP. The foundation was timely since in the second half of the 80s several programs emerged which made routine calculations on chemically interesting systems possible: Computational Chemistry was born out of Theoretical Chemistry.

It was soon realised that there is a need for regular conferences where community can meet and discuss the new aspects of our field. The first meeting took place in 1994 in Nancy (France) under the name European Conference on Computational Chemistry. 11 successful conferences followed ever since.

During the years, the number of participating countries increased, now almost all Member Societies of EuChemS are represented. This led to two important milestones: in 2006 (chairman Tore Brick) the WP turned into a Division and in 2016, (chairman Antonio Laganà) its name has been changed to Division of Computational and Theoretical Chemistry. This latter change reflects the fact that chemical computations are closely follow theoretical trends.

The key activities of our Professional Network are:

1. Establishment and running the successful Conference series, called European Conference on Computational (and Theoretical) Chemistry with the first addition taking place in Nancy (France) in 1994, organised by Jean-Louis Rivail. Further conferences were held in Lisbon 1997, Budapest 2000, Assisi 2002, La Londe le Maures 2004, Tale 2006, Venetia 2008, Lund 2010, Sopron 2013, Fulda 2015, Barcelona 2017, and Perugia 2019.
2. European Master on Theoretical Chemistry and Computational Modeling (TCCM), launched in 2006 chaired by Manuel Yanez (Spain). Between 2010-2019 it was supported by an Erasmus Mundus grant (FPA 2010-0147, 2015-1694). The new application was also successful and now running under the supervision of Manuel Alcamí (Spain) from 2020 until 2024. The European Joint Doctorate on TCCM was created a couple of years later and was supported by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network (ITN-EJD) (TCCM Project – 64294) for the period 2015-2019.
3. Participation with computational Chemistry project in the European Open Science Cloud.

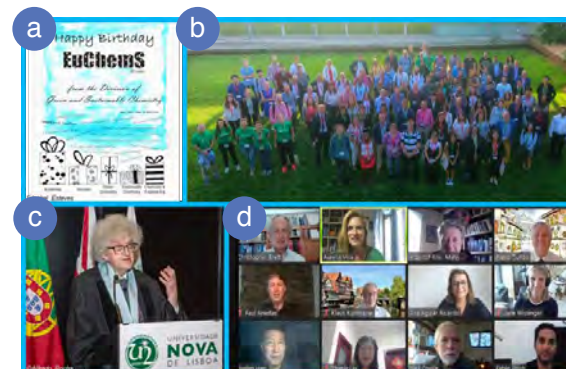
Division of Green and Sustainable Chemistry (DGSC)



Ana Aguiar-Ricardo,
DGSC Chair

For the Division of Green and Sustainable Chemistry (DGSC) a very important milestone was when in September 2015 at the EuCheMS General Assembly in Vienna, the President of EuCheMS, Professor David Cole-Hamilton proposed the transformation of the WP on Green and Sustainable Chemistry, chaired by Professor Pietro Tundo, into a Division. This was followed by a formal announcement at the opening ceremony of the 2nd EuCheMS congress on Green and Sustainable Chemistry (2EUGSC – Lisbon) and celebrated by 212 participants from 23 different countries.

Very important milestones since were the highly successful meetings in Lisbon (2EUGSC), York (3EUGSC), and Tarragona (4EUGSC). The very informal environment of the EUGSC congresses fostered multidisciplinary cross-fertilisation of ideas among participants from both academia and industry, including young scientists and students.



a. EuChemS 50th birthday card from DGSC;
b. 4EUGSC group photo;
c. Sir Martyn Poliakoff awarded Doctor Honoris Causa;
d. Division-supported GC Summer School in Venice (July 2020)

Another important event introduced by our Division was has the recognition of scientists that have contributed immensely to the field of Green and Sustainable Chemistry. Thus, the 2018 ESCA was presented to Professor Paul Dyson and in 2019, and honorary doctorate awarded to Sir Martyn Poliakoff, on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Year of the Periodic Table.

The DGSC is a constantly growing network of scientist dedicated to the advancement of sustainability and Green Chemistry in Europe. It is and enormous pleasure for me to Chair this Division and to be able to oversee its diverse activities that range from teaching to the organisation of conferences and other events. I remember fondly the Summer School of Green Chemistry in July 2020. Because of the Corona crisis, the event was changed to an online format, but it turned out to be an intense, highly international and very interesting exercise where many Division members have shared their knowledge from and research areas with the students from all over the world. It was a great pleasure to lecture for such enthusiastic crowd of highly motivated students. The summer school featured highly recognised scientists globally, with highlight of a keynote lecture from the Nobel Laureate Professor Jean-Marie Lehn. As mentioned, our Division is gaining momentum, and as Chair, and together with my management Board, we are currently actively looking to broaden the scope of the Division by reaching out to more chemical societies and inviting more members to participate in this highly interdisciplinary network of scientists in the area of Green and Sustainable Chemistry.

Division of Solid State and Materials Chemistry (DSSM)



Paul Attfield,
DSSM Chair

A clear milestone was when our Working Party became the Division of Solid State and Materials Chemistry. The momentum for this had been created by Martin Jansen of the Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research in Stuttgart (Germany).

He had noticed the need for Materials Chemistry representation within EuCheMS, and had established the Working Party with support of members of the advisory group to the European Conference on Solid State Chemistry, which has subsequently become the main biannual meeting for the Division. After a long administrative struggle, Martin succeeded in collecting the minimum of 20 supporting letters from European national societies required for receiving “Division” status.

However, as Martin was unable to attend the General Assembly of EuCheMS in Dublin in 2012, I attended in his place. Despite my trepidation, our proposal was warmly received, and the Division was duly founded. Martin served as Chair until 2017, after which I succeeded him.

I can tell an anecdote that EuChemS management would prefer to forget! As a rebellious young Division, we decided to hold our own satellite workshop in Sevilla, immediately before the 6th EuChemS Chemistry Congress there in September of 2016.

We had overlooked the EuCheMS rules that rather forbid that sort of thing! The “Challenges and Prospects for Solid State Chemistry” workshop itself was a great success, featuring talks from 12 excellent speakers (with a 1:1 gender ratio that we felt compared rather favourably to that of the main Congress) amid a delicious atmosphere of transgression. A poignant afterthought is that a key organiser of the workshop, Emilio Moran of the Complutense University of Madrid, passed away in April as an early victim of the Coronavirus. He is warmly remembered as a kind, enthusiastic and good-humoured colleague, as well as for being one of the rebels of 2016!



“Challenges and Prospects for Solid State Chemistry” delegates in Seville, 2016; Emilio Moran is at the right end of the photograph

Working Party on Formulation in Chemistry



Jordi Esquena,
WPFC Website Editor

In the case of the Working Party on Formulation in Chemistry, the European Scientific Community was already gathering for a long time before the formalisation of the Working Party. The origins can be found in the first Formula Conferences, which were organised by the Société Chimique de France (formerly known as the “Société Française de Chimie”), first in Nice (1987) and second in Toulouse (1990).

After these initial editions, Formula Conferences expanded and became larger events with truly international character (Formula III conference in La Grande Motte, 2001, France), thanks to the incorporation of various European Societies, namely the Formulation Science and Technology Group of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FSTG/RSC, United Kingdom), DECHEMA - Society for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology e.V. (DECHEMA, Germany), SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden AB (SP, Sweden, which in that time was known as YKI), and the Spanish Group of Colloids and Interfaces of the Royal Societies of Chemistry and Physics (GECI/RSEQ-RSEF, Spain). Moreover, several companies (Akzo Nobel, BASF, Bayer, Evonik) also joined the board, ensuring a truly and deep dialogue between Industry and Academia.

From 2001, Formula Conferences enjoyed more stability, with a permanent scientific committee, the International Advisory Board (IAB), providing continuity in the character of the conferences, with its special dialogue between academia and industry. From 2001 to 2017, the IAB was an informal group, but it evolved and finally nucleated into the Working Party, which was formally created and joined EuChemS in 2017. Moreover, in Formula III in 2001, selected papers from oral or poster presentations were started to be published in special issues of international journals.

The Formula IV conference was the first one to take place outside France (London, 2005), and it was followed by the next ones in Germany (Berlin, 2007), Sweden (Stockholm, 2010), France (Mulhouse, 2013) Spain (Barcelona, 2016), China (Beijing, 2017) and the last (Formula X conference) took place in the United Kingdom (Manchester, 2019).

The current challenge is adapting to the changes that COVID-19 are forcing. The pandemic situation is a driving force for becoming more digital. The new trend is not exempt of risks since the taste of communication is often not the same. However, hopefully, the Working Party will reappear like a Fenix bird with renewed impulse.

Working Party on the History of Chemistry



Brigitte Van Tiggelen,
WPHC Chair

In September 2005, the 5th International conference on the history of Chemistry (5ICHC) took place in Estoril, Portugal. This was a break with the past, as all four previous conferences had taken place in different cities of Hungary, and yet this was a continuation and a professionalisation of a tradition that went back to 1991. Scholars interested in the history of chemical sciences and technology met in Portugal to share fruitful discussions and open new perspectives in the field, to get acquainted with the regional history and heritage, in particular in chemistry's past, thanks to scientific collections and sites visits, and most of all to foster and sustain ongoing collaborations and friendships. All the big projects of our network have been conceived, discussed, and finalised during these meetings. As these meetings have been organised regularly all around Europe every other year (Leuven 2007, Sopron 2009, Rostock 2011, Uppsala 2013, Aveiro 2015, Trondheim 2017, Maastricht 2019), they have also created a strong sense of belonging and community among historians of Chemistry and allied sciences and technologies, reaching well beyond Europe. These conferences truly are the beating heart of the Working Party on the History of Chemistry.



Group picture of the 6ICHC, Leuven (Belgium),
28th August - 1st September 2007

What is the relevance of a historical group in the frame of a European Chemical Society? In 1993, the WPHC sent a letter to IUPAC stressing the tradition that chemists avoided calling an element after a person. At the time, a heated debate was indeed raging in naming element 106 a.o., eventually settled for Seaborgium in 1997.

The past informs the present, and the present serves the investigation of the past. A good example is the preservation and sharing of important historical material and instruments in Europe such as The Svedberg's ultracentrifuge the WPHC visited during the 9ICHC (Uppsala) in 2013. Or the replication of a chemical process of the past at the 11ICHC (Trondheim) in 2017, with a fully functioning distillation furnace built according to the material and know-how of the 17th century.

History of Chemistry is relevant to contemporary Chemistry, not just in a commemorative way, gathering memories and celebrating milestones. It's also essential in understanding and questioning the present state and evolutions in the discipline and the community. And in return, contemporary knowledge further enlightens the understanding of chemical works of the past. This has been and will remain at the core of the WPHC's pursuit.



Replicating a distillation process of early modern
Chemistry in Trondheim (11ICHC), 2017

MILESTONES FROM FECS TO EUCHEMS

1970

It all started in the second half of the 1960s, when representatives of Western and Eastern European chemical societies decided to join together and create a federation, quoting one of the founders **"Europe is a geographical term, not a political one"**.

In their own words **"the aim was not only the improvement of scientific and professional cooperation among chemical societies in Europe but also to build up an image of European Chemistry in the public, to strengthen the self-consciousness of European chemists and to awake awareness of European Chemistry"**. The fact that these aims were very much aligned with the actual mission of EuChemS is a tribute to the foresight of our predecessors. FECS was organised in Working Parties covering most aspects of the traditional disciplines of Chemistry, some of which have the equivalent in our current Professional Networks.



2004

In October 2004, at the General Assembly in Bucharest, it was decided to change the name to the **European Association of Chemical and Molecular Sciences, EuChemS**.

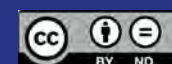
2011

EuChemS started its work from Brussels and the new Secretary General is appointed.



2018

Finally, in 2018 in the General Assembly which was held in Liverpool, our current name **European Chemical Society**, EuChemS was launched. EuChemS expanded the scope and activities of FECS incorporating many new members (Chemical Societies and Supporting Members), in addition to establishing new Divisions and Working Parties.



The inaugural meeting was attended by 17 chemical societies and took place in Prague at the University of Chemistry and Technology. A Steering Committee was established which met alternately in East and West European cities to draft statutes and to provide contents for this umbrella organisation.

In addition, from the beginning, they were very much concerned with the comparison of the qualifications in Chemistry in the different countries so they established the Professional Affairs division anticipating in a way, the Bologna process.

Along the years, FECS continued with the **promotion of European Chemistry**, introduced prizes such as the FECS Lectures, and established international links collaborating in the foundation of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies, FACS.

2006

The legal entity is registered in Brussels. The first European Chemistry Congress is held in Budapest.



2014

A new constitution was approved and published in the Belgian Gazette on 28th April 2014. New statutes and bylaws were established including the financial contribution of the Member Societies based on a quota per affiliate of the Member Societies, and the headquarters moved to the European District in Brussels.

2020

51 Member Organisations
18 Professional Networks
European Young Chemists' Network
160,000 chemists

The Youngest Division: EYCN

European Young Chemists' Network (EYCN)



Cristina Todașcă,
EYCN Chair
(2012-2013)

Among the newer divisions of EuChemS, there is the enthusiastic and dynamic European Young Chemists' Network (EYCN). The Division started 14 years ago, from an idea crystallised during the first EuChemS Chemistry Congress in Budapest. The beginning was officially bound by the acceptance of the EYCN by-laws during the Berlin meeting, in April 2007.



First Steering Committee of the EYCN, from left to right Jens Breffke (Sponsor relation Officer), Csaba Janáky (Chair), Emma Dunphy (Secretary), Juan Luis Delgado (Treasurer), Cristina Todașcă (Communications Officer)

I remember that we were 12 delegates, gathered in one room, from around Europe, most of us with no experience in organising a network. The tasks of the 2 days meeting were at first sight pretty simple: to decide if we are willing to start the EYCN, to establish its exact European goals in accordance with all chemical societies specificities, and to actually set it in action. It does not seem a very difficult thing to accomplish, but there was a different aspect included: we did not know each other and had no knowledge about our

capabilities, many of us never acted as volunteers in other young chemists groups and had no understanding of things at the European level. Now, if I look back at those days, I still do not completely understand how we managed to accomplish so much in that limited time scale, but by the end of the meeting we had the by-laws accepted by 12 delegates and the first Steering Committee to set in action the goals of the EYCN.

I was privileged to work in the EYCN for 10 years and to actively witness the development of the network. At personal level, it was an important learning experience in a multicultural environment. Facing the obvious challenges: lack of finances for our events, the physical distances between the Board members and representatives, and sometimes the lack of experience, we could only balance it with enthusiasm and creative ideas. Those qualities were appreciated by industry and we soon had the opportunity to grow the activities organised at European level with the reliable support of the sponsors and as well the EuChemS boards. Now the EYCN has grown considerably, has representatives from 30 chemical societies spread in 28 countries as well as worldwide partnerships. Some examples of the current activities: information on studying & working in Europe (map.eycn.eu), video interviews with renowned scientists & professionals, photography contest "Photochimica", video contest "Chemistry Rediscovered", soft skills presentations, workshops & webinars, international European Young Chemists' Meeting (EYCheM), annual EYCN Delegate Assembly (DA), symposium at the EuChemS Chemistry Congress (ECC), European Young Chemists' Award (EYCA), awards for best presentations at conferences across Europe. The numerous activities that are in action nowadays in the EYCN, go beyond our dreams when the discussions started.

EUCHEMS AWARDS FOR SERVICE (1985-2019)

This award acknowledges outstanding commitment to the goals of EuChemS, such as fostering Chemistry and molecular sciences, improving competitiveness, visibility, coherence, or structure of Chemistry in Europe. There are, of course, many other chemists who did not receive the EuChemS Award for Service, but also made great contributions to Chemistry in Europe.

1985	F. Cuta, W. Fritsche, F. Martin, A. Maschka, G. Pannetier, R. E. Parker, (posthumously), M. Preisich (posthumously)
1986	H. C. van der Plas
1987	S. Pasynkiewicz
1988	Á. Jakabos
1989	V. P. Zubov
1990	R. Kellner
1991	P. B. Czedik-Eysenberg
1992	U. Hofacker, V. Chvalovský (posthumously)
1993	G. Jommi
1994	H. Malissa, J. S. Gow
1995	R. Darms, L. Skattebøl
1996	F. Szabadváry
1997	E. Pungor
1998	J. W. van Spronsen
1999	A. Masia, I. Bauke te Nijenhuis
2000	L. Niinistö
2001	D. Bricknell
2002	M. Gagan
2003	L. Sydnes, W. Fresenius
2004	J. M. Lehn
2005	R. Battaglia
2006	P. Kündig
2007	A. Oberholz, A. A. Jensen
2010	G. Náray-Szabó, G. Natile
2011	J. Empis, E. McEwan
2012	H. J. Freund
2014	L. Oro
2015	H. Grennberg, A. Smith
2018	F. De Angelis, S. Facchetti, R. Salzer
2019	E. Keinan



The Brussels era (since 2011)

Moving from London to Brussels



Luis Oro,
EuCheMS President
(2008-2011)

I became president of the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences, in October 2008, choosing as vision for my presidency “Creating a European identity among chemical societies”.

My mandate followed this vision and was characterised by the development and execution of the EuCheMS strategy 2009 to 2013, based on six pillars: strengthening the science base by fostering active divisions and interdisciplinary actions, supporting policy development events in Brussels through the establishment and implementation of sustainable development activities, fostering professional development and networking, promoting effective partnerships, enhancing communication and recognition and improving decision making in governance and finance.

A relevant goal, during my term of office, was to establish EuCheMS as an independent and functional organisation bringing forward a change in the constitution which led to a more effective governance structure and the change of the Secretariat office from London to Brussels. The constitutional amendment was published in the Belgian Gazette, being effective from 6th March 2020, including the establishment of the Executive Board with a composition enabling it to focus on finance and strategy development. The independence and expertise of the office was further enhanced by the appointment of Nineta Majcen Hrastelj as new Secretary General in the final year of my presidency, succeeded Evelyn McEwan who served for 16 years as FECS/EuCheMS General Secretary.

EuCheMS played an important role in promoting a European dimension for the 2011 International Year of Chemistry acting as a “task force” for European actions. 2011 was also designed to mark the centenary of Marie Curie’s Nobel Prize in Chemistry. In this context, EuChemS promoted a book entitled ‘European Women in Chemistry’ which offers a collection of lively stories about notable European women chemists, including Nobel Prize winners Marie Curie and Dorothy Hodgkin.

As a continuation of the first and second EuCheMS Chemistry Congresses, the very successful third EuCheMS Chemistry Congress was held during my term of office in Nürnberg (2010), with around 2500 attendees from more than 60 countries. The European Sustainable Chemistry Award was also created during my term and presented for the first time at the Nürnberg conference. The EuChemS Chemistry Congresses continue to be the most prominent events for the European chemical community.

New constitution and by-laws



Ulrich Schubert,
EuCheMS President
(2012-2014)

Most developments during my presidency, if not all, can be traced back to the earlier appointment of a new General Secretary and relocation of the EuCheMS office to Brussels. This boosted the advancement of EuCheMS towards the professional society of European chemists considerably, based upon the strategy document framed under the presidency of Luis Oro.

A major pillar was strengthening our interaction with the EU Parliament and the Commission, mainly through events organised in the Parliament and written statements on chemistry-related issues. A workshop with the European Parliament’s Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) Panel on 9th November 2011, on “Chemistry for a better life” allowed us presenting the just finished EuCheMS roadmap “Chemistry - Developing solutions in a changing world” to the European authorities. Prior to the workshop, a photo exhibition of EYCN with the topic “Everything is Chemistry” was opened, which remained in the hallways of the parliament for several weeks. In further consequence, we were invited to organise several other events in the EU parliament.

An initially promising collaboration with CEFIC striving for funding activities in the area of artificial photosynthesis/solar-driven chemistry did not materialise. However, EuCheMS was able to provide a platform for a consortium aiming at a Flagship initiative within Horizon2020. In parallel, we initiated joint calls for proposals of several European funding agencies on this topic, led by the German Science Foundation (DFG). The intentions of this initiative were documented in a EuCheMS White Paper on “Solar-Driven Chemistry”.

Prerequisites for an efficient professional society are clear and easily adaptable rules of operation. To this end, a new, concise constitution was developed exclusively focussing on fundamentals. This had to be approved by the Belgian authorities. The constitution was backed by more flexible by-laws, which can be modified and adjusted by the General Assembly, if necessary. Concomitant with the new constitution a new voting scheme was adopted, as well as a new type of membership (“Supporting Members”) and a new logo.

To sustain EuCheMS’s claim to represent chemists in whole of Europe, great efforts were made to improve the involvement of all Member Societies in EuCheMS activities, especially the ones of the smaller and East-European countries. The Secretariat improved internal communication and information flow by setting up timely electronic communication channels.

Policy initiatives and strategic partnerships



David Cole-Hamilton,
EuChemS President
(2015-2017)

It was a steep learning curve as I had never been on the Executive Board, although I did know about EuChemS from having been on the Organometallic Division and run one of their Conferences. I had excellent teachers in Ulrich Schubert, Nineta Hrastelj, Francesco De Angelis and Robert Parker, so I gradually got the hang of it (I hope!).

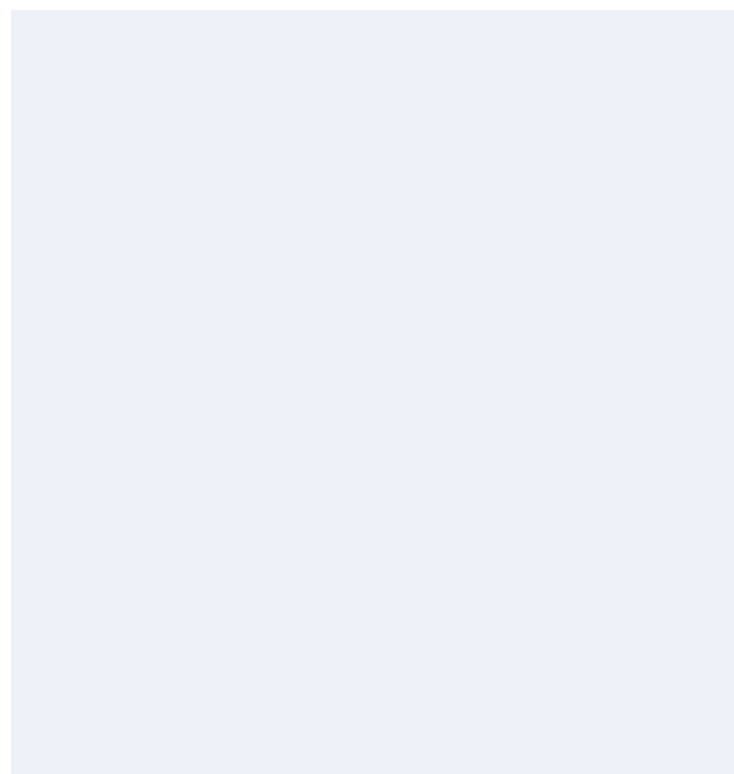
After trying to improve the relevance of the central EuChemS to Professional Networks and Member Societies, we started to look outwards. We strengthened our interactions with the European Parliament by writing to Commissioners, issuing Press Releases, joining the MEP-Scientist pairing scheme and running more Parliamentary Workshops, often hosted by Catherine Stihler MEP, on topics as diverse as Employability, Endangered Elements, MRSA and Glyphosate. Outside the European Union, we signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the American Chemical Society (ACS) and engaged with the Federations of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS), African Societies of Chemistry (FASC) and Latin American Chemical Societies (FLAQ), starting up the Atlantic Basin Conference on Chemistry.

After attending the very moving 100th anniversary commemoration of the first major use of chemical weapons in warfare (Ypres, April 2015) together with Thomas Geelhaar, President of the GDCh and David Phillips, Past President of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), we have worked to support the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in opposing the use of chemical weapons, especially through articles, radio interviews and press releases including the Seville Declaration deploring the use of chlorine in warfare, which was signed by 36 Presidents of National Societies or their representatives at the hugely successful 6th EuChemS

Chemistry Conference (ECC) in 2016 in Seville, and the Statement on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict.

This work led in part to the highly regarded on-line course, Good Chemistry - Methodological, Ethical, and Social Implications designed by Jan Mehlich. As part of the Management Committee we were instrumental in helping IUPAC to have 2019 proclaimed by UNESCO as the International Year of the Periodic Table.

Most of all, I enjoyed meeting so many wonderful people in Professional Networks, Member Societies, the Secretariat and Executive Board. They offered me great friendship and I hope we have made progress in developing the importance of the chemical family in Europe. My special thanks go to the RSC for the immense personal, and financial support they gave me and for their organisation of the wonderful 7th ECC in 2018 in Liverpool (UK).



EuChemS Periodic Table and the new name



Pilar Goya,
EuChemS President
(2018-2020)

For someone who loves Chemistry and believes that it benefits from a European dimension, there cannot be a more rewarding experience than to serve as President of EuChemS. I have had this privilege, also being the first woman to occupy this position, so let me briefly highlight some of the events that personally I found more gratifying.

First, my Presidency witnessed a landmark in our history: a new name, a new acronym, and a new logo, EuChemS, the European Chemical Society.

Then, I was so fortunate to be President in 2019, the International Year of the Periodic Table, with the many interesting events and activities that took place. A major breakthrough was our iconic Periodic Table, which highlights availability and vulnerability of the 90 elements that make up everything, and which was designed by David Cole-Hamilton and Nicola Armaroli and promoted widely. This EuChemS Scarcity Periodic Table, available in 32 languages, was a great success, and it was first disclosed at the European Parliament. For a chemist, it is a unique experience to participate in workshops with MEPs and experts on very different topics and during these years we have organised several of these events.

Within the celebration of the IYPT, EuChemS strived to highlight the role of women in Chemistry, co-organising with IUPAC, the RSEQ and the University of Murcia in Spain the congress entitled "Setting their Table: Women and the Periodic Table". In addition, an extensive book on "Women in Their Element: Selected Women's Contributions to the Periodic System" was edited by two members of our Working Party on the History of Chemistry.

I am also very proud of our historical landmark program which aims at identifying places that played a role in shaping the history of Chemistry in Europe. The first, at the European level, was awarded to the Ytterby mine, where an extraordinary outreach event was organised, unveiling a plaque, and visiting the mine which was very thrilling.

Another coincidence of my Presidency was the commemoration of our 50 years, which was a great occasion to trace how FECS transformed into EuChemS, starting with a most interesting meeting with Wolfgang Fritzsche. 2020 was also marked by the COVID-19 pandemics, so we had to adapt all our activities to online versions, such as our 50th anniversary celebration on 3rd July, which was a great event, hosting two Nobel Laureates.

Whatever the achievements of EuChemS during the years of my Presidency, of which I have just given you a flavour, they are the result of a joint endeavour of so many people, so I want to thank all those who have accompanied me in this adventure, Vice-Presidents David Cole-Hamilton and Floris Rutjes, the members of the Executive Board and Professional Networks, the Member Societies in particular the Spanish Royal Society of Chemistry (RSEQ), and the Secretariat in Brussels, with a very special acknowledgment to Nineta Hrastelj.

Let me finish with the same Shakespeare quote I used when I started my Presidency in 2018, "What's past is prologue", so let us look to a bright future for EuChemS.

The lifeblood of our community: EuChemS Divisions and Working Parties



David Cole-Hamilton,
EuChemS President
(2015-2017)

The Divisions and Working Parties as well as the Member Societies of EuChemS are full of the most wonderfully creative chemists, who have committed to serving the wider community beyond their own research interests. They are champions for their own areas and organise conferences, workshops, publications, prizes, Landmarks, and a myriad of other activities.

However, they were not yet fully well integrated with one another nor with the central EuCheMS organisation. Although all were doing good jobs, two-way communication was sub-optimal and the whole was little more than the sum of the parts. Following a Strategic planning meeting in Torun and a meeting of Division Chairs in Brussels, both in 2014, attempts were made to improve relations between Divisions, Member Societies and central EuCheMS. By invitation, I was able to visit many Divisions, Working Parties and Member Societies, all of whom welcomed me with open arms, and I made many excellent friends. I spoke at conferences (about Chemistry or EuCheMS) and attended Board meetings of Divisions and Working Parties. Apart from representation on the Executive Board, which was already in place, we gradually, involved the Professional Networks (PNs) and Member Societies in responding to EU consultations, in EU Parliamentary Workshops, in Task Groups and in EuCheMS publications (articles about PNs and Member Societies appear in every issue of the Chemistry in Europe quarterly newsletter).

We also introduced a revenue sharing scheme for Divisional Conferences so that Divisions have their own budgets and contribute to EuChemS funds, and PNs are now encouraged to organise seminars within the European Chemistry Congresses. These often involve more than one PN working together. A recent virtual meeting of the PNs attracted 38 delegates from their Boards and elicited very positive feedback.

I was especially pleased to join all of the EYCN Delegate Assemblies during my time in Office, to regularise their attendance at Executive Board meetings, to include representatives of the EYCN on all Task Groups and to be able to persuade EuChemS to fund some of their outreach activities such as the Young Chemists Crossing Borders (YCCB) programme with the ACS Young Chemists.

All of this activity led to much more work for the Secretariat, so happily, there are now three full-time employees. My impression is that the whole is now very much more than the sum of the parts and that all sections of the EuChemS family are working better together to provide the umbrella for chemists in Europe which we craved.

Communication makes it grow and blossom: EuChemS Member Societies



Nineta Hrastelj,
EuCheMS/EuChemS Secretary
General (since 2011)

The European Chemistry community known today as the European Chemical Society (EuChemS) has grown from the founding 17 member organisations to 51 during its first 50 years. Since the beginning, Member Organisations have shown strong commitment and enthusiasm for continuously being a flagship in the chemical sciences, recognised distinguished partner in advising policymakers, and a source of entertaining science communication for citizens. When adding to this commitment embraced diversity of members, and leadership, who recognises communication as a vital tool for any successful endeavour, one is not surprised about traditionally rich outcomes of this European organisation.

Implementing smooth two-way communication in a voluntary organisation is, however, not a trivial task, especially after a restructuring. In 2012, the EuCheMS Executive Board took key decisions in this respect, which has put the Secretariat in a position to set up internal communication channels amongst all groups within the EuChemS. To get such process firmly in place, it takes time. It was thus essential to find ways to encourage communication also from Member Organisations to the Secretariat. It comes with no surprise that EuChemS did succeed in full implementation of this process by now. In recent years, past time-investments in communication are bringing fruits. A right indicator for successful internal communication is probably this year's General Assembly (GA) meeting, where we had remarkable 90% votes present online at the first-ever online GA. Technological developments have brought a revolution in communication, however, these are just new places for meeting online; communication in its essence remains the same.

With well interconnected members, EuChemS can confidently look forward to future EuChemS' responses to societal challenges, with increasingly bigger impact, despite challenging times.

Kick-off in Brussels



Nineta Hrastelj,
EuCheMS/EuChemS Secretary
General (since 2011)

It was back in 2011 when I found myself looking through the window in my new office of the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS), as the organisation was called at that time. The office was at CEFIC premises, metro line number 5 brought one there, from Gare Central or Schumann, the latter, when starting from the European district in Brussels. Most of the time, it was grey outside, as one expects in Brussels, quite perfect for working. There were two tables, a cupboard, and some chairs in the office; beside me a PC and a phone. A new era for EuCheMS, I was told, with the Secretariat in Brussels and no longer from London. And with the new Secretary General, as Evelyn has retired.

I very much like shaping new things, and with my knowledge and experience with working in a multinational environment in addition to my Chemistry background, I was curiously confident in what was lying ahead. However, I vividly remember the former Secretary General's question during my job interview, asking me how I would encourage and keep enthusiastic volunteers, who are the core of what is now the European Chemical Society. It seems my answer was quite right, and this is what I have been thinking about often at the beginning: it was just me, a PC, and enthusiastic colleagues all around Europe, with limited financial resources. Can we make it? Can we make Chemistry, science that we love so much and know its importance for society, heard in the heart of EU policymaking? All starts with the first step, they say, and as at that time EuCheMS President Ulrich Schubert said: "We moved into a new house, but we do not yet have electricity, water, and other support services connected; this is the first thing we shall do." And so we started.

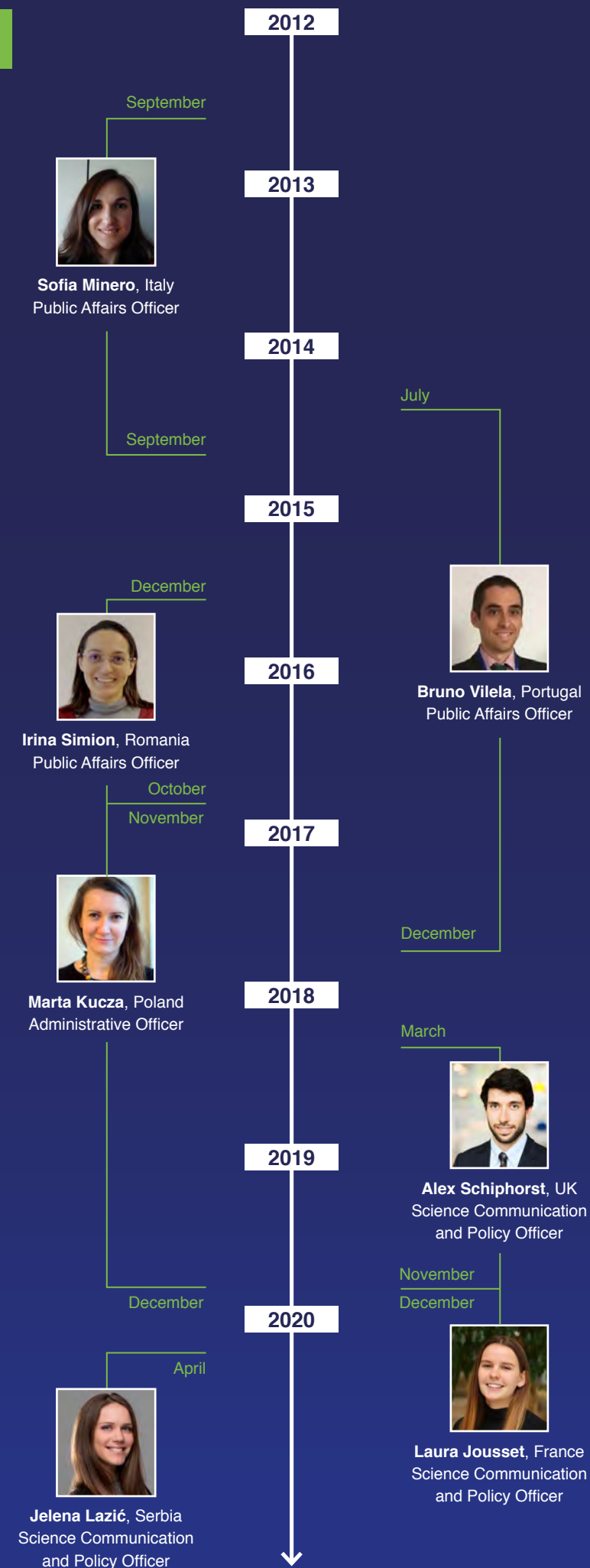
The evolvement over the last nine years has been beyond anything I was looking forward to in 2011. Once the (legal) ground was set, all was ready for launching Chemistry in Europe from its European district of the heart capital, Brussels, where the EuChemS office is still today on the premises of CSIC (Spanish National Research Council). Now the EuChemS Member Societies, Supporting Members, and Professional Networks (Divisions, Working Parties, and the European Young Chemists' Network) can rely on support from the EuChemS Secretariat team, which counts three staff members.

These, as I call them 'EuChemS human chemical reactions', result in many diverse outcomes of EuChemS, from awards, scientific conferences, and policy activities, which bring together scientists, policymakers, and citizens at the European level through national networks.



At the General Assembly meeting in Rome in 2017 I gave a short presentation on the 2011-2017 evolution from a management perspective at the EuChemS Secretariat in Brussels, summarised in the visual shown above. Additionally, relevant activities and milestones were met during these years, which deserves to be explicitly captured. I anticipate doing so in a chapter of the publication on 50 years of FECS/EuChemS that is planned to be released in few years.

EuCheMS/EuChemS Secretariat since 2012



Financial spots at early EuChemS: from the Wiener Schnitzel to the CPL multiplier



Francesco De Angelis,
EuChemS Treasurer
(2010-2016)

The Wiener Schnitzel was excellent indeed... but for the whole duration of the dinner my tablemate friend, a member of the Executive Board of EuChemS (still with capital “M” at that time) from a relatively small Eastern-European chemical society, kept talking to me continuously and very loudly: “It was not acceptable that small chemical societies from emerging countries should pay the same annual fee, per individual member, as the largest Western chemical societies”! We were in Vienna, as you may have guessed, February 2011, and that was one of the first EB meetings I attended as the newly elected treasurer of EuChemS. Indeed, he was right. In those years EuChemS was still young. Until then EuChemS was economically sustained by the four largest and wealthy chemical societies in Europe, and the shift towards an even contribution per each society, albeit slow, was dramatic for many of them. The membership fee, per individual “senior” member of each society, had grown 7 times from 2006 to 2010.

From my point of view, even in a “small” non-economic community like EuChemS, the necessary economic policy cannot be a source of uncertainty or pain. It is necessary to be very clear in the objectives that are set, with wisdom and foresight, ideality, vision. These categories constitute the objective and aims of EuChemS but need to be supported by financial paradigms based on concreteness to pursue the objectives, and correctness also in front of the contributors. The first task group I chaired in 2011 focused on finding a new subscription model that had to be sustainable for all Member Societies. The “CPL” (Comparative Price Level) multiplier and the “X” factor were introduced, as corrective to the subscription fees for each Member Society. As far as I know, they are still in place.

The former considers the purchasing power of euro and exchange rate for each country, while the latter sets a limit at the membership fee as percentage of the income-budget of the society. In 2015, a new task group was chaired, aimed at defining strategies for new financial resources, exploiting the new constitution that accepts Supporting Members, and looking at the organisational skills, and at the growing scientific and educational activities of the association. EU funded projects, publishing activities, website and name branding were considered to be in the focus. It was also decided to financially support the Divisions, Working Parties, and the European Young Chemists’ Network in their work.

At the end of 2016 I left EuChemS as Treasurer. I miss the high-level discussions in the Executive Board on the future of Chemistry in Europe, the intense work to ensure a single and strong voice in European science policy, the proximity of so many invaluable friends... the Wiener Schnitzel or so, and the chats there. Long life to EuChemS!

1970-2006

Federation of European
Chemical Societies (FECS)

2006-2018

European Association for
Chemical and Molecular
Sciences (EuChemS)



Since 2018

European Chemical Society
(EuChemS)



The photographs are only from the Brussels era, many other milestones will be captured in another publication on the history of FECS/EuCheMS/EuChemS.



a. Luis Oro, Nineta Hrastelj, Evelyn McEwan, Francesco De Angelis in Frankfurt (2011)

b. Three ACS Past Presidents and EuChemS guests at the ACS Spring Meeting in Orlando (2019): Elsa Reichmanis, Nineta Hrastelj, Pilar Goya, Diane Grob Schmidt, Catherine T. Hunt

c. David Phillips (RSC President), David Cole-Hamilton (EuChemS President) and Thomas Geelhaar (GDCh President) at the 100th anniversary commemoration of the first major use of chemical weapons in warfare in Ypres (2015)

d. EuChemS Periodic Table of Element Scarcity released during the International Year of the Periodic Table (IYPT2019)

e. First joint meeting of the Executive Boards of EuCheMS and the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS) in Istanbul (2014)

f. First Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between EuCheMS and the ACS signed by Nineta Hrastelj, Diane Grob Schmidt and David Cole-Hamilton in Seville, Spain (2016)

g. Jean Pierre Bourguignon (ERC President), at the 5th ECC in Istanbul (2014)

h. At the Notary in Brussels attesting the new EuCheMS Constitution: Hans-Georg Weinig, Francesco De Angelis, Sofia Minero, Frédérique Backaert, Ulrich Schubert, Nineta Hrastelj, Sergio Fachetti (2014)

i. Meeting in Brussels of the Open Science Policy Platform (OSPP), high-level expert group of Carlos Moedas, the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, where EuChemS was represented by Executive Board member Wolfram Koch (first from the right) (2016)

j. Revealing the first EuChemS Historical Landmarks plaque (at the European Level) for the Ytterby mine in Sweden: Annette Lykknes, Brigitte Van Tiggelen, representative of the local community, Nineta Hrastelj, Pilar Goya, Helena Grennberg (2018)

k. Jerzy Buzek, Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the ITRE Committee, addressing the EuChemS General Assembly in Toruń, Poland (2014)

l. Three Presidents met at the 7th ECC in Liverpool: Luis Oro, Pilar Goya, David Cole-Hamilton (2018)

m. President-Elect David Cole-Hamilton and President Ulrich Schubert cutting the cake with the EuChemS logo at the General Assembly in Budapest, Hungary (2013)

Speeches on the occasion of the 50th anniversary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 50th anniversary celebration had to be organised as an online event, instead of having a meeting in Prague where FECS was founded in 1970.

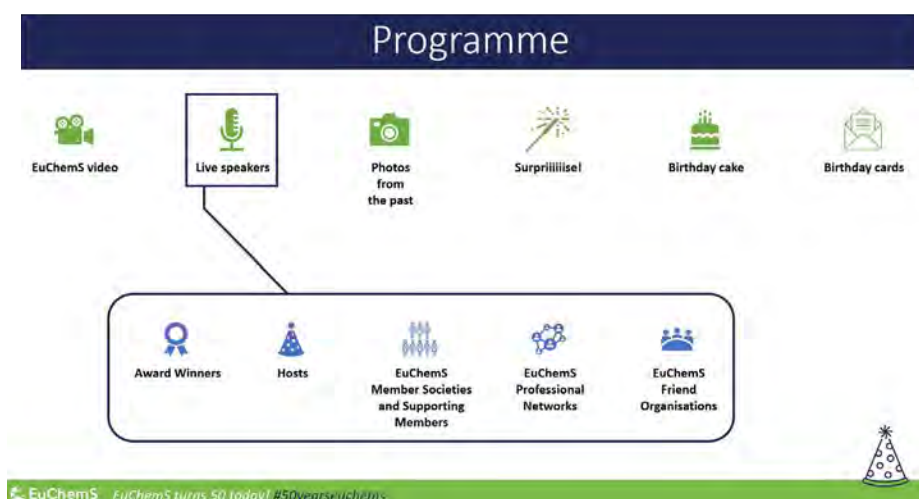
Nevertheless, this celebration was a delightful opportunity to host almost 200 participants and guests, including numerous live speakers, such as Nobel Laureates, representatives from EuChemS Member and Friend Organisations, Professional Networks, and from the EuChemS Presiding Council.

In case you could not join us, we are sharing here with you their speeches, and the recording of the event is already available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMrs2WX23zE

Enjoy!



Opening slide at the 3rd July celebration



Programme of the online celebration

Opening speech

Pilar Goya,
EuChemS President

“ It is my great pleasure as President of EuChemS to welcome you to this online celebration of our 50 years of existence.

I would like to start by thanking all of you for joining; Presidents of our Member Societies and Supporting Members, Presidents of related chemical organisations, former Presidents of EuChemS, former members of our Executive Board, and all of you who from the very beginning enthusiastically accepted our invitation to participate today on this online celebration of the 50 years of EuChemS. I am very glad to see that we are now more than 200 online.

We are greatly honoured and very much appreciate the participation of two Nobel Laureates, Professor Jean-Marie Lehn, and Professor Ben Feringa, who will address us shortly.

And of course, we could not have come this far without the diligent work of our Secretariat who have done their very best to make this event a success.

EuChemS, the European Chemical Society, previously the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuChemS), started as FECS, the Federation of European Chemical Societies in Prague, on 3rd July 1970, so this year is our 50th birthday. Therefore, we have planned many activities along the year.

Among them, let me mention that we have edited a brochure with historical facts and with the perspectives and contributions of former members of our presiding council.

We also visited and published an interview with Dr Wolfgang Fritzsche, one of the founding fathers of FECS, and we, of course, have planned this celebration today in Prague. Due to the pandemic, many of these events had to be cancelled, and so the main celebration that, as I said, would be taking place in Prague today has been substituted by what we are doing now online, but nevertheless, we hope that next year we will all meet again in Prague because we are going to provide the University of Chemistry and Technology where FECS started our historical landmark recognition.

As you are probably aware, in EuChemS besides our well-established scheme of different awards to individuals, such as the Gold Medal and the Service and Lecture Awards, we have launched in 2018 a new EuChemS Historical Landmarks Awards programme to identify chemical sites that have played a vital role in defining the cultural makeup and history of Europe. No doubt, the place where it all started deserves this highest recognition, so, hopefully, next year on this very day we will meet in Prague and we will award the corresponding plaque, an event to which you are all very welcome.

That is all from my side, I thank you all again for your participation, so let us together celebrate 50 years of EuChemS, 50 years of European Chemistry. ”

Nobel Laureates

Jean-Marie Lehn,
winner of the Nobel Prize
in Chemistry in 1987

“ Hello!

It's a pleasure to be here with everybody today. I would like to congratulate EuChemS for this 50th anniversary. I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to this success, the people who organised the meetings, the members of the Board of the committees, and of course the staff which behind the lines made it possible. I have been a very long-time supporter of European Union, even before it existed, since 1957, which is quite some time ago when I was in high school - I felt that European Union was our future. I was happy over the years to see that European chemical community came together and built up. I also contributed to another aspect of that which is to launch the European system of chemical journals, in 1994, together with Peter Göllitz and with the support of the German Chemical Society. Let me now make a few remarks on Chemistry in general.

All too often is Chemistry considered as a mere utilitarian activity, barely a science, when it is not despised. It must be “green”; it must be “sustainable”, it must answer the questions raised by society, it must process the CO₂ that others have produced, it must provide the solutions to problems that others have generated, and so on... it is great to be considered so resourceful, but is this really all Chemistry is about? No! Let me present it in a funny way.

Some years ago, a science writer from one of those so-called “high-impact” journals, once told me that he was writing an essay on the big questions in Science, noting that the physicists proclaim, “we are trying to unravel the laws of the universe”. Big question, indeed. The biologists said, “we are unveiling the rules of life”. Big question, of course.

What are the chemists doing? They are producing new molecules, they are making novel materials, useful drugs... Fine, very nice, very good for everybody and of much help, but where is the big question? My answer was in substance the following: “Wait a minute, maybe Chemistry is in charge of the biggest question of all and that is: How does and how did matter become complex along the ages?” How is it that from divided, to condensed, to organised, to living, and on to thinking matter, the Universe was producing an entity that is able to ask about the origin of the very Universe itself from which it emerged and about its coming about? An entity that is able, in a radical short cut, to interrogate the Universe itself from which it is born? The answer to this BIG question is simple: by Self-Organisation! It happened on the basis of the laws of our universe, self-organisation, from simplicity to higher and higher complexity. The problem then is HOW did it happen? It is the task of Chemistry to decipher what lies behind this word.

Chemistry builds the bridge between the laws of the Universe, the general laws on which everything depends, and their specific expressions in life and thought as we know it, and in life and thought on other planets where I'm convinced exists too, and where all the elements will be the same, and where the chemical bonds will be the same, and where the combinations will be the same. This is also what Chemistry brought to mankind, the Periodic Table of the Elements which add elements of visible matter everywhere in the Universe. Third is Chemistry, which builds this bridge between the general laws and the expression. The goal is to discover, to understand and to implement the processes that govern the evolution of matter towards increasing complexity, from the elementary particle to a property we call thinking.

On the occasion of the International Year of Chemistry in 2011, the French Physical Society asked me for a brief text for their magazine ‘Reflets de la Physique’ and I concluded this text in a somewhat provocative way, that “Chemistry is to Physics what a Beethoven symphony is to the laws of acoustics!” Without acoustics, there is no symphony, but acoustics does not contain the symphony, and that is also what Chemistry is. So, with these few words on the future of Chemistry, and especially in these days don't forget that virus is just a bunch of trivial stupid molecules that don't even live. We will get it, we will overcome it thanks to science, thanks to Chemistry. All these are chemical interactions, we will understand them, and we will overcome. So, this is a pathway to the future, for many other futures and I would like again to very warmly congratulate EuChemS for these first 50 years and send my very best wishes for the next 50 years!

”

The speech of
Professor Lehn is
available on the
EuChemS
YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=ucY6mELqkZ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucY6mELqkZ0)



Ben Feringa,
winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in
2016, winner of the European Chemistry
Gold Medal in 2018

“ It's a great honour to briefly address you at this special EuChemS event and I would like to start with congratulating the entire European chemical community with the 50th anniversary of the European Chemical Society. Let me emphasise the important role EuChemS has played in the past decades to bring together learned societies in Chemistry all over Europe. It succeeded in making our community of scientists to join forces and continue to bring the message forward that Chemistry is the creative and creating science par excellence. More than ever, chemists, either being engaged in teaching, or involved in chemical research, or in development work in academia, institutes or industry, will have to unite to address several of the most challenging problems society is facing. It's beyond any doubt that chemists will play a key role in the development of materials for energy storage, the pharmaceuticals of the future, conversion of CO₂ in fuels, or new chemical building blocks, or recycling of plastics - just to mention a few major challenges ahead of us.

EuChemS not only brings together large community of chemists in Europe, but it arguably also represents us at numerous occasions towards society, politics and industry, and advocating how EuChemS chemists can and will address these challenges together with our colleagues all over the world. Modern Chemistry, indeed, has many faces and the fundamental problems we face are also very diverse, but perhaps that's our strength, like the diversity of our community here together in EuChemS. Sometimes, it might all look a bit complex, but do not forget we should be very happy. Are complex molecular systems not representing one of the most challenging fundamental aspects of Chemistry in the decades ahead of us? Professor Lehn already mentioned it: the fundamental questions, the molecular origin of life, just to mention one.

Last year, we celebrated 150 years of periodic table and it was Mendeleev who gave the chemists a common language. Fifty years ago, EuChemS gave us a common voice.

We can be very proud, indeed, and the voice of this European learned society will be more important than ever. In shaping our future, we will have to go far, beyond our current horizon. We have indeed to leave our comfort zone, if we really want to change the face of our chemical industries, building our sustainable society of the future, or answering some of the fairly fundamental questions where Chemistry is at the lead.

Cooperation and taking advantage of all the talents in our community, the EuChemS community and beyond, will enable major changes. Yes, EuChemS plays a key role in my opinion, and advocating the importance of investment in Chemistry, as our community will make inventions that will make the difference. But equally important is bringing forward the message of the beauty of knowledge and the beauty of insights, the marvellous wonders of the molecular world, the joy of discovery. Stimulating the young talents in Chemistry which are eager to shape our future, encourage them to think bold, and stimulate their creativity and imagination. I'm particularly pleased to see that EuChemS is very active in this respect and let's also not forget the role of learned society like EuChemS in maintaining quality of thought in an era where we are facing to be flooded with information, joined expertise and quality of information will be, in my opinion, more important than ever. EuChemS will definitely help us to maintain the high standards.

I would like to finish with briefly mentioning that exactly 50 years ago, when EuChemS was born, I started as a first-year undergraduate student to perform my very first chemical experiments.

How could this young student have ever realised that in 2018 he would be honoured with the European Chemistry Gold Medal at the 7th EuChemS Chemistry Congress in Liverpool. This was not only an excellent conference, a highly diverse and inspiring programme, but a memorably event indeed, where we could also enjoy the Beatles singing once again. I'm very grateful to the European chemical community, proud to be a member, and I consider it is a privilege to be able to share my enthusiasm for our colourful discipline with so many colleagues and friends all across Europe, and across the world.

I would like to conclude, to once more congratulate EuChemS and wish you all much success with the important mission for our joined future.

Thank you so much! ”

The speech of
Professor Feringa is
available on the
EuChemS YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=6N3qT9_jfls](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6N3qT9_jfls)



EuChemS history

Brigitte Van Tiggelen,
Chair of the EuChemS Working Party
on the History of Chemistry

“ On July 3rd, 1970, at a time Europe was divided by an iron curtain, chemists from East and West came together in Prague. Representatives of 19 chemical societies travelled from 14 countries to attend the inaugural meeting of the Federation of European Chemical Societies.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the historical event that brings us together today, from all over the world, and under a format that would not have deemed possible at that time. The way however we are coming together today, despite the circumstances that hinder travels, definitely reflects the initial values of common belonging and collegiality that lied at the core of the European Chemical Society since its very beginning.

As every historical moment, what occurred on that day in 1970, is a point in a trajectory, an outcome of past efforts and a seed for the future. In the mid-sixties already, several chemists felt indeed that quite a number of activities in Chemistry, be they professional or scientific, were necessitated on a European basis. The process to create a federation was initiated by Eric Parker from the Royal Institute of Chemistry (now merged into the Royal Society of Chemistry). Western European Societies, big and small membership alike, were invited to discuss the proposal. And the proposal was met with interest: however, Wolfgang Fritzsche, from the GDCh, the German Chemical Society, pushed for a broader vision of Europe, that would also include chemical societies from Eastern and Middle Europe. This was a bold step and a visionary one. It is of course no coincidence that this wish would come from a German whose country was split by a geopolitical divide after WW2.

By 1968, a small task group of 7 people was convened to draft statutes. This group already represented the diversity of what was to become FECS and ultimately the European Chemical Society: the two Western initiators (that is Royal Institute of Chemistry and GDCh), two important Eastern chemical societies (Czechoslovak Chemical Society and Hungarian Chemical Society), the chemical society of Austria, a country that had historically been a door between West and East in Europe, also reaching to the Balkans, and then two smaller but nevertheless active Western chemical societies, the Dutch Chemical Society and the French speaking Belgian Chemical Society. The final version of statutes was voted next year, and translated into four languages (English, French, German and Russian). Since many societies responded positively to the call to enter such a federation, the meeting in Prague was organised, a little more than two years after the Prague Spring had ended. Again, this is a very symbolic event.

On the inaugural meeting, 18 societies from 14 countries were accepted as members. Ten years later the number had already risen to 30 Member Societies from 24 countries, and 25 years later membership reached 41 societies from 32 countries, pushing the boundaries further West, East, North, and South across the Mediterranean Sea. In the meantime, the political divide between East and West was erased, the European Union grew larger and stronger, and chemists met new challenges in serving society, science, and the humankind. But now like then, our European Chemical Society keeps fulfilling duties that were expressed by Wolfgang Fritzsche in 1980: “It is the aim and purpose of the Federation to create a forum for chemists in the whole of Europe to meet, to exchange opinions and ultimately to ensure a better understanding. We are convinced that in achieving these aims, the Federation does not only contribute to the progress in Chemistry and to the benefit of chemists, but also to preserve the conditions and the atmosphere of peace.” ”

A word from the Treasurer

Eckart Rühl,
EuChemS Treasurer

“ Dear Participants of the Celebration of 50 years of EuChemS,

Great visions into the future and a Chemistry success story driven by the Member Societies of the European Chemical Society. This is in short what is the core of EuChemS since 1970, when 17 Chemical Societies met in Prague for founding FECS, the Federation of European Chemical Sciences. At that time nobody knew that this was the start of a highly successful community, which has today 51 Member Societies and Supporting Members representing more than 160,000 Chemists from almost all European countries.

Federal concepts are not only the strength of the European Union, but this is also true for the European Chemical Societies joining for EuChemS. For EuChemS, the saying of Aristotle is more than true: “The whole is more than the sum of its parts”. But at the same time each Member Society is precious to EuChemS and constant efforts are made to keep the Member Societies together, since we are all sharing not only dedication and enthusiasm for Chemistry, but also responsibility, and clear political visions for being a reliable partner of the entire European Society.

The EuChemS Member Societies bridge the gap between the national activities in professional Chemistry in their own country and the European facets by joining with one voice what Chemistry has to say in Europe these days. This is synergy in its true sense, where coordinated activities of EuChemS are started, and shared and reach the individuals all over Europe. Recent examples are the multiple activities on the occasion of the International Year of the Periodic Table that were

held in many European countries, the biennial European Chemistry Congresses hosted all over Europe, and building constantly a network of cultural heritage sites.

And vice versa, the expertise from the Member Societies and their members is jointly focused for example via EuChemS to European Parliamentary Workshops addressing outstanding topics related to Chemistry in Europe.

We know that each Member Society does everything that is possible for the benefit of EuChemS and the other Member Societies – and sometimes even more than expected, for example being hosts of the annual General Assemblies or European Chemistry Congresses. This is done always friendly, generous, highly efficient, and pragmatic, where everybody's arguments and proposals are carefully heard and considered.

This is, what I personally enjoy with EuChemS, as a part of Europe that is alive, that works tightly together in the field that joins all of us – Chemistry. I am happy that we will hear in the following greetings from some Member Societies and their view on EuChemS and we will also see later the birthday cards from other Member Societies and friends of EuChemS with all their good wishes for EuChemS.

I wish EuChemS, and I hope that I speak here for all participating in this event, a bright future for the next 50 years and we trust on the full support of all Member Societies and members and those who will join in the future.

Happy Birthday EuChemS! ”

EuChemS Member Societies and Supporting Members

Gregori Ujaque,
President of the Catalan Chemical Society -
Societat Catalana de Química (SCQ)

“ Bon dia i felicitats pel Cinquantè Aniversari de l'EuChemS.

Good morning and congratulations for 50th anniversary of EuChemS.

This is a big celebration for EuChemS, but this is also a big celebration for Chemistry, that is the common point among all of us.

We love Chemistry, among other things, because it is a tool to solve problems, small problems or the big challenges that our society is facing today, like energy, climate change, and so on. Or for instance, the COVID crisis, so Chemistry is also involved in solving this problem. We should take advantage of this global pandemic to put science in the first line of the society. I would like to convince this audience to benefit from this crisis to persuade our society about the importance of Science in general, and Chemistry in particular. I think this is our responsibility as chemists.

I want to also add a comment on another of the biggest worries we have as a society, that is racism and discrimination, for whatever reason. We must be fully committed to eradicate this kind of behaviour in our society, and we must start by our own Chemical Societies. This is our duty. I know we have heard this many times, but while the problem persists, it is very important to keep it always in mind and try to eradicate this.

Finally, let me add a few words about the Catalan Chemical Society; we are not a very big society, but we try to be quite active; for instance, we organised several EuChemS Division meetings.

Our society was created back in the 30s of last century (together with physicists and mathematicians). Then we lived a very black period in our history, but in the 80s we became a fully independent society.

Since then, we tried to incorporate the Catalan Chemical Society to EuChemS, though it was not a very easy task in the beginning. In 2007 we succeeded, and we were accepted as a full member of EuChemS. We are very happy and very proud to be part of the big family of the Chemical Societies in Europe.

Congratulations to everybody in EuChemS!

Felicitats a tothom i a gaudir de la Celebració!

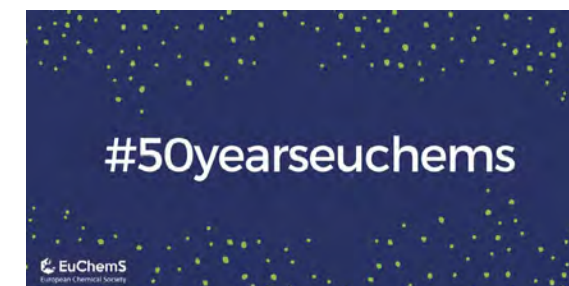
ADEU! ”

Anu Airaksinen,
President of the Finnish Chemical Society
- Suomalaisen Kemistien Seura (SKS)

“ Dear President and Colleagues,

The Finnish Chemical Society congratulates the European Chemical Society for the 50 years anniversary. During these 50 years EuChemS has made amazing work in promotion of European Chemistry and Chemistry research by improving professional collaboration and visibility of Chemistry to the public and among policy makers. Chemistry is a significant key player for answering and solving many global questions and challenges and during these years EuChemS has actively contributed to the public debate and decision-making by providing expert views and scientific advice based on the most recent scientific knowledge. The Finnish Chemical Society has been one of the member organisations since foundation of the Federation of European Chemical Societies and was one of the 18 Member Societies participating the inaugural meeting in Prague on 3rd of July 1970, exactly 50 years ago. We have had the great privilege to contribute EuChemS' activities in several EuChemS divisions during these years together with our European colleagues. I think that in these exceptional times our joined efforts are more important than ever.

We wish EuChemS bright future and many successful years to come! Our warmest congratulations to the 50 years old society! Happy birthday, EuChemS! ”



New hashtag which was introduced and widely used in 2020

Peter R. Schreiner,
President of the German Chemical Society -
Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker (GDCh)

“ Dear colleagues, dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a very firm believer in the unity of Europe, I am very pleased to participate in this online event. It would have been much nicer for all of us if we had met in person, but like so many events, this ceremony has fallen victim to the Corona pandemic. Let us therefore make the best of it.

In 1970, the German Chemical Society was one of the 17 founding societies of the Federation of European Chemical Societies. It is remarkable that in the middle of the Cold War, with a wall across Europe, chemists from Eastern and Western Europe joined forces to form a European Society. We chemists in Germany are very proud that the driving force for this came from the then GDCh Managing Director Dr Wolfgang Fritzsche. “Chemistry is a science, not a political issue”, he said and insisted that the Eastern European societies should also be involved. It is thanks to him that the Federation of European Chemical Societies did not become a purely Western European association. He was a member of the first Executive Committee and simultaneously headed one of the two secretariats of the society; the other one was in Budapest. Pilar Goya and Wolfram Koch visited Wolfgang Fritzsche, who is now over 90 years old, in January. He spoke very lively about the foundation of the Federation of European Chemical Societies. You can read the interview with him on the EuChemS website. Not only GDCh, but also EuChemS owes Wolfgang Fritzsche a great debt of gratitude. In 1993, he was appointed a life-time honorary president by the Federation of European Chemical Societies.

And we German chemists are also grateful to EuChemS and its predecessor organisation the Federation of European Chemical Societies, because they facilitated the unification

of the West German and East German chemical societies after the reunification of our two states. During the Cold War, the Chemical Society of the German Democratic Republic was not allowed to become a member of the Federation of European Chemical Societies. But since the 1980s, East German chemists were allowed to attend the meetings of the General Assembly as guests when they were held in an Eastern European country. Thanks to the personal contacts established in these meetings, it was possible after the fall of the Berlin Wall to speed up the reunification of our two chemical societies, and thus, as early as 1991, the two German chemical societies were able to merge to form an all-German society.

Today our young colleagues can hardly imagine this, but people of my generation still remember Europe divided into East and West, which made contacts and communication so much more difficult than today. The achievement of the Federation of European Chemical Societies and its founding members must therefore be rated all the higher. Nowadays we have completely different opportunities for communication and cooperation, and I am very happy to see the ways we all are using these opportunities.

I think we can say quite immodestly that we European chemists are doing much better than the political Europe does, which is weakened by Brexit and many other conflicts. We work together across borders. And across these borders, not only many cooperations develop, but friendships also form, and Brexit will not change that. We can be proud of this!

We all know that the challenges of the future like slowing global warming, providing enough food for everybody, and sustainable energy through renewable resources cannot be solved without the contributions of Chemistry, and they cannot be solved without the global cooperation of scientists. We German chemists are looking forward to a common future as members of the European Chemical Society.

Happy Birthday EuChemS! ”

Livia Simon Sarkadi,
President of the Hungarian Chemical Society -
Magyar Kémikusok Egyesülete (MKE)

“ Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues,

As the President of the Hungarian Chemical Society, I am pleased to represent Hungarian chemists at the 50th anniversary celebration of EuChemS.

The Hungarian Chemical Society is 113 years old; it is one of the oldest professional organisations in Hungary founded in 1907. HSC currently represents about 2500 chemists working in academia and industry.

We can proudly look back on our long history and especially on our achievements with EuChemS over the last 50 years.

As HSC is one of the Founding Member Societies of the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS), later European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS), and most recently European Chemical Society (EuChemS) I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to briefly present our joint activities on this festive occasion.

When the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS) was established in 1970, and for many years thereafter, this organisation operated with two general secretariats. The Western Office operated in Frankfurt, at the Secretariat of the German Chemical Society, and the Eastern Office in Budapest, at the Secretariat of the Hungarian Chemical Society. The main aim was to facilitate stronger professional relations with central and Eastern European states in those days of a divided Europe.

Within FECS and EuCheMS, representatives of Hungarian Chemical Society are widely seen as leading players. Among them five Hungarian colleagues have served as General Secretary of FECS from 1970 to 2001: Miklós Preisich, Áron Jakabos, Gábor Náray-Szabó, András Edelényi, and Ildikó Antal.

And Professor Gábor Náray Szabó, the Former President of the HCS, served as last President of FECS (2002-2005).

As regard my activities within EuCheMS; I was an appointed member of the Executive Board of EuCheMS between 2010 and 2013 as one of the two representatives of Division's Chairs before became an elected member in 2014.

Five Hungarian colleagues chaired Working Parties, Divisions of FECS, and EuChemS: Ernő Pungor, Gábor Náray Szabó, Ferenc Szabadvány, Livia Simon Sarkadi, Péter Szalay. Of course, many other Hungarian colleagues are working actively within their Divisions.

Professor Gábor Náray Szabó was the main organiser of the 1st European Chemistry Congress of EuCheMS, which was held in Budapest, Hungary in 2006, with 2300 participants, including 6 Nobel Laureates and 100 invited speakers.

This was a great responsibility for Hungary, we were honoured to receive the confidence of EuCheMS, and we were very pleased to pass on our experience to colleagues organising subsequent such meetings.

Hungary has hosted a number of FECS and EuChemS conferences over the past 50 years and organised management meetings (1988, 1989, 2013) .

Five Hungarian representatives received recognition for their excellent work (FECS/EuChemS Award for Service): Miklós Preisich (posthumously), Áron Jakabos, Ferenc Szabadvány, Ernő Pungor, Gábor Náray-Szabó.

The Hungarian Chemists wishes to pay a tribute to EuChemS on occasion of the 50th anniversary of its foundation.

Thank you for your attention! ”

Cristina Todașcă,

Council Member of the Romanian Chemical Society - Societatea de Chimie din Romania (SChR)

“ Thank you for inviting me to talk in this beautiful celebration of Chemistry and cooperation.

I first learned about FECS (Federation of European Chemical Sciences) in 2004, when I was in the middle of my PhD studies. At that time, Professor Sorin Rosca (President of Romanian Chemical Society) asked the young active members of SChR to join efforts for a good local organisation of the FECS General Assembly. In this way I had the chance to witness a historical moment in EuChemS existence, the moment when the decision of changing the name from FECS to EuChemS was taken. This decision was made during a meeting which took place in the Romanian Parliament House in Bucharest.

Three years later I was given a different chance, I was sent to represent the Romanian young chemist to a meeting in Berlin. The meeting was intended to discuss and organise a youth Division within EuChemS. At that point SChR did not have a young chemist group, but using the experience gained in the Berlin meeting, on my return home, I managed to start the Romanian Chemical Society Youth Section - which over the years developed and it is now one of the most dynamic and active groups.

The Berlin meeting was the starting point for EYCN and for me the beginning of an adventure, because I was elected part of the first board of EYCN and I started a long activity first as communication officer, after that as secretary and chair of EYCN. It was a lot of work, but I had the chance develop in a dynamic and multicultural environment.

Therefore, at personal level and professional one, I am grateful that EuChemS was created 50 years ago, that it offers a space where Chemistry is the main language which connects scientist from all over Europe and abroad.

On behalf of Romanian Chemical Society, I would like to wish EuChemS happy fifty years anniversary and many more successful years to come! ”

Yves P. Auberson,

President of the European Federation for Medicinal Chemistry (EFMC)

“ I would like to wish our dear friends at EuChemS a happy anniversary! The European Federation for Medicinal Chemistry and its scientific community of medicinal chemists and chemical biologists wishes you all the best.

As you know, EuChemS and EFMC have been working together on many projects over the last few years. It started with a STOA working breakfast at the European Parliament in April 2016, on the important topic of antibiotic resistance. It was followed sometime later by a workshop on the causes and cures for Parkinson's disease, which is another topic of importance for our society: there is currently no cure for Parkinson's disease and in view of the ageing of our population, this is becoming a really important issue.

In parallel, very close interactions developed between EFMC and the Life Sciences Division of EuChemS, with an exchange of scientific sessions at our mutual symposia, the European Chemical Biology Symposium of the Life Science Division of EuChemS and EFMC's International Symposium on Medicinal Chemistry. What makes me particularly happy is to see the increased interactions between the European Young Chemists' Network and the Young Scientist Network of EFMC. This is a very dynamic group of young investigators, young scientists, and this is our future. It is a great pleasure to see these interactions developing, and beyond this to see all that EuChemS has been doing to support the European Scientific community. My hope is that this will continue, and that EuChemS and EFMC will collaborate for – why not – another 50 years.

In any case, EFMC wishes you all the very best and a happy anniversary.

Thank you, EuChemS! ”



In the absence of a real cake with candles...



...we had a virtual one!

EuChemS Professional Networks

Marco Arlorio,
representative of Professional Networks
at the Executive Board

“ Dear President, dear Executive Board,
dear attending guests,

I am delighted to join everyone in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the European Chemical Society. I am truly honoured to represent the EuChemS Professional Networks, which as Divisions and Working Parties are one of the operational arms of the European Chemical Society.

As Chair of Division and representative of 18 Professional Networks within EuChemS, I would like to briefly highlight three key points in this important event.

The first one is related to the historical activity of the Divisions. Since the beginning, in the last century, FECS, then EuChemS and currently European Chemical Society were organised in Divisions. These Divisions enhance networking in their own fields of expertise promoting collaboration with other European and international organisations. These Professional Networks organise high quality scientific conferences in chemical and molecular sciences, at inter- and trans-disciplinary level.

The second one is related to the link between the past and the future.

Since the beginning, starting from our founding, the Divisions constantly work in order to improve the fundamental role of Chemistry in our life.

The image of Chemistry is often underestimated or mis-considered by the European citizens: our mission is to defend, to promote and to develop a positive ethical consensus towards Chemistry in our society, bridging together the professionalism of academic environment and the industry with the requirements of the modern society.

Finally, the third point is related to our vision of the next future. The Professional Networks have made an important contribution to promoting the name of EuChemS within the professional and scientific environments, particularly where Chemistry is the principal interest. Connection and interdisciplinary collaboration within Chemistry Sciences are the main targets for our Professional Networks. The future will be a challenge, but three words will continue to be the pillars for us: Chemistry is life.

On Behalf of the Divisions and Working Parties which I am representing here, my warmest congratulation to our European Society in this anniversary: 50th is the departure, and not a finishing line.

Congratulations! Happy birthday! ”



EuChemS Friend Organisations

Christopher Brett,
President of the International Union of
Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC)

“ It is a great pleasure for me, as president and on behalf of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, to bring you greetings and give congratulations to The European Chemical Society on your 50th Anniversary, your golden jubilee. It is certainly an anniversary to remember, and the successes of EuChemS have demonstrated how important it is for the chemical organisations and institutions, academic and industrial, all over Europe, academic and industrial, to speak as one voice in the challenging times that have always existed, particularly since the founding of FECS and that are now becoming more crucial. Chemistry is not the problem; Chemistry is essential and is part of the solution to many of the challenges that the world faces. Last year was the centenary of IUPAC, founded in 1919 with a significant impetus from chemical industry to foment the speaking of a common language in Chemistry

and we now add as main objectives the free exchange of scientific information and fostering sustainable development worldwide.

Last year was also the International Year of the Periodic Table, coordinated by IUPAC, with EuChemS being a main partner and playing an important part in demonstrating the significance and fascination of the chemical elements, particularly reminding us about the scarce elements which we need to take care of. It was also a lesson for us all in how important are outreach and public awareness. Much enthusiasm was generated amongst all, particularly amongst young people. The enthusiasm must carry on for the younger of us are the future and we will need all the tools and expertise that we can muster. It has been a great pleasure for IUPAC to collaborate with EuChemS in the past and I am sure that it will continue. I would like to wish you a very fruitful and chemically prosperous next 50 years, when we can come together again and celebrate your centenary. ”

Reuben Jih-Ru Hwu,
President of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS)

“ Good Morning, President Professor Pilar Goya, Ladies and Gentlemen.

In the 1970s, UNESCO and many national aid agencies understood the important role on the application of Chemistry to the development of social, economic, and environmental well-being of nations. Accordingly, it helped to organise the formation of the FACS using the model that had been used with success to create the Federation of European Chemical Societies, now the European Chemical Society.

Two and a half thousand chemists from all of the world gathered in Taipei, Taiwan, in December 2019, about a half year ago, for a feast of Chemistry to celebrate the 40th anniversary of FACS. It was founded in 1979, almost 10 years later than European Chemical Society. Currently, FACS includes 32 chemical societies. To the West part, we have Mendeleev Russian, Turkish, and Israel societies; to the East, there are Royal Australian and New Zealand societies; in the middle, they are Japan, Korean, Taiwan, China, Thailand, Indian societies and others.

All of us have been successful in the development of Chemistry in the region through networks, working groups, and collaboration.

Today is an important day for us to celebrate our friend organisation: European Chemical Society. As the president of FACS, I represent all of the 32 Asian Chemical Society members extending our congratulations to European Chemical Society on your 50th anniversary celebration! Meanwhile, it is our wish to take this chance to initiate a mutually supportive relationship and substantial collaboration between FACS and European Chemical Society.

It is my hope that we shall meet again in the 2021 FACS Congress in Istanbul or the 2022 European Chemical Society Congress in Lisbon in the future! Keep in touch and thank all of you! ”

Daniel Garcia Rivera,
President of the Latin American Federation of Chemical Associations - Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones Químicas (FLAQ)

“ On behalf of the Latin American Federation of Chemical Associations, it is my pleasure to congratulate EuChemS for your 50th anniversary. I would have to say that the Latin American Federation of Chemical Associations gathers all the associations and federations and chemical societies from South America and from Latin America. FLAQ was founded in 1959, so it is now 61 years old. We are older than EuChemS, but I have to say that we have a lot to learn from EuChemS. We have to learn from the path that you had in terms of integration, how you have sought and unified purpose for Chemistry, how you have actually launched new journals, spread the voice of Chemistry in Europe and in the world, how you integrate diversity, different languages. From the point of view of FLAQ, we accept that we have a lot to learn from the European Chemical Society, how you have actually integrated for leading the path of Chemistry and science in general. I just want to be brief, so congratulations, and thank you very much for the invitation, and thank you for leading the path, EuChemS. ”

Luis Echegoyen,
President of the American Chemical Society (ACS)

“ Hello and greetings from El Paso, Texas! On behalf of the American Chemical Society's worldwide membership, it is my distinct pleasure to congratulate EuChemS on its 50th anniversary! These are testing times worldwide, but the Chemistry community has a unique role to play in addressing these challenges. From Medicinal Chemistry to materials science and beyond, Chemistry practitioners worldwide are working diligently to serve the needs of our communities wherever we are. International collaboration has always been near to my heart and career and is also an important goal of the ACS. As we celebrate EuChemS' 50 years and look towards its future, I look forward to our continued cooperation and encouraging scientific exchange and partnership wherever science leads us. Happy birthday, EuChemS, I look forward to celebrating this milestone in person, hopefully in the very near future. ”



EuChemS had guests from all around the world!

Closing remarks

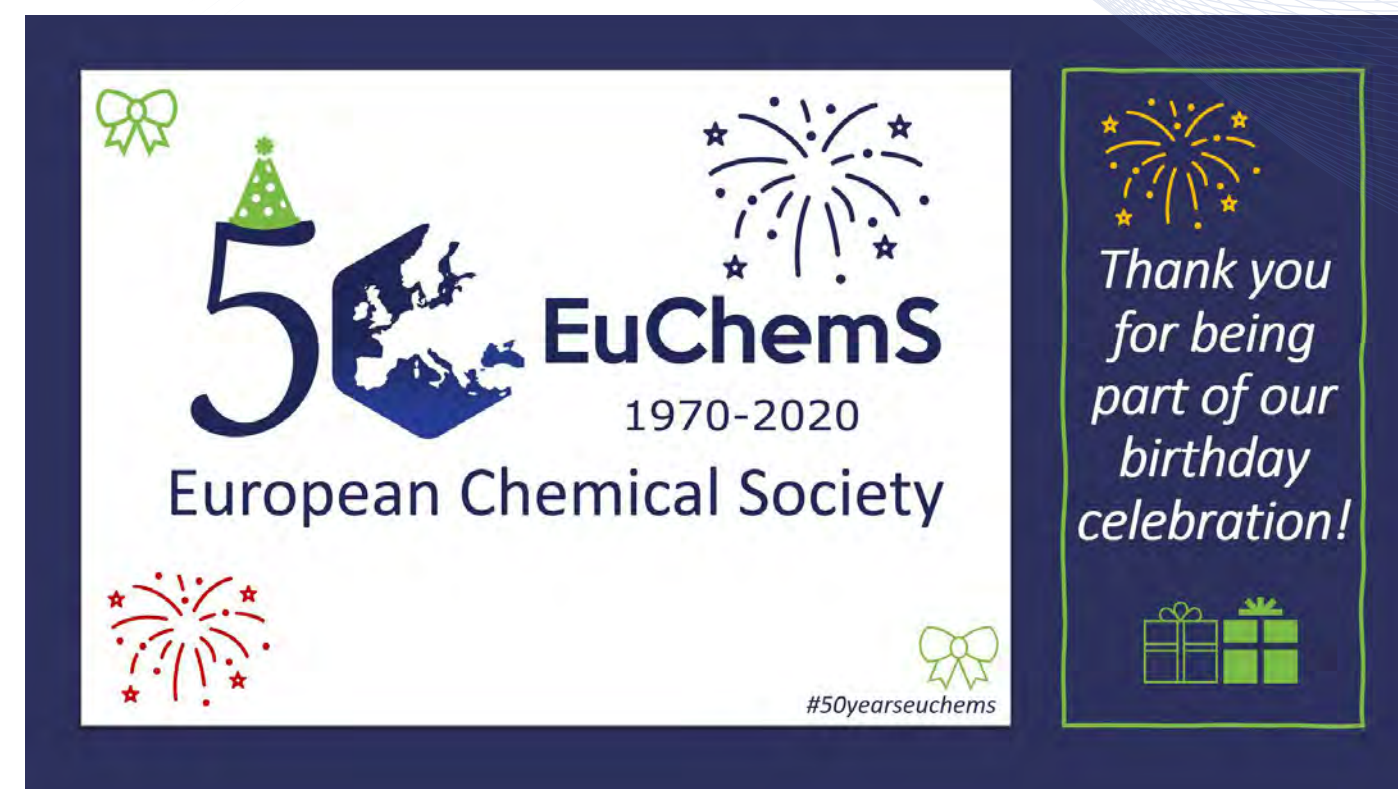
Floris Rutjes,
EuChemS President-Elect

“ Dear friends and colleagues,

In the speeches this morning, we have looked back at the past 50 years and we have seen what the role of EuChemS has been during these decades. It is fascinating to see that despite fundamentally different political systems, chemists from across Europe have found each other and started working together. And why is that? Because they have one important thing in common: they love Chemistry, they know what Chemistry can do and experience that Chemistry goes beyond borders. Chemistry acts as a unifying theme. That is also why I like the new name of our society so much: the European Chemical Society. And we should be proud of this society. It had different names, it has grown over the years, it has become stronger, better organised and it will continue to grow. Brexit was not foreseen, but despite the fact that the UK will no longer be part of the European Union, the Royal Society of Chemistry will remain one of the strong pillars within the European Chemical Society. Again, Chemistry is stronger than politics. That is good, but there is still much to do. Think of the climate change due to greenhouse gases, the environmental problems like the plastic soup, and the search for clean energy. Enormous societal challenges that need to be addressed and require the input of chemists. And all of a sudden on top of that, we had the COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptive consequences for society. Again, chemists are needed in the political and societal discussions, and they are needed to contribute to the scientific solutions. The European Chemical Society will continue to support the pan-European chemistry community in these efforts. And we can do so, since we have grown into a firm organisation representing, through and with our Member Societies, approximately 160,000 individual chemists. This of course also comes with the responsibility to stand for gender balance, inclusion, diversity and equal chances for everyone, very fundamental principles that we pursue as a society because in the end it will make us a stronger community. Smart use of digital tools and social media, close collaborations with our Member Societies and developing attractive campaigns on relevant chemical and societal topics are among our key objectives to strive for a fierce position for European Chemistry. We as the Executive Board of this society are eager to enter the next 50 years and hope that we can do that together with all of you! That leaves me with closing this ceremony and I would like to do so by getting you all back on the screen and to propose a toast.

Let us raise the glass and I propose a toast to a bright future for European Chemistry in Europe and to successful next 50 years of the European Chemical Society!

Happy birthday! ”



Farewell slide at the 3rd July celebration

NOTES



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