

# CHIMIA REPORT/COMPANY NEWS

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Swiss Chemical Society, info@scg.ch, +41 31 306 92 92



## Summary of the EuChemS Newsletter 2020-1

### Editorial: Connecting societies

Did you know that you are part of EuChemS? Through the membership of a national chemistry association, you are also part of the European Chemical Society, which represents 51 member societies and organisations and 160,000 individual chemists. Although in size comparable to the American Chemical Society, EuChemS is less well-known among its members. This is something I would like to change. Since the beginning of this year, I have the honor to serve as President-Elect of the European Chemical Society. It marks the start of a six-year term in the EuChemS Executive Board and I very much looking forward being a member of this team. I see clear opportunities to increase the impact of EuChemS and contribute to improving the visibility of the chemical societies in Europe.

Let me first briefly introduce myself. I was trained as a synthetic organic chemist at the University of Amsterdam. Nowadays, I am a full professor in organic synthesis at Radboud University in Nijmegen. Perhaps more importantly, I have been president of the Royal Netherlands Chemical Society (KNCV) for the past three years. As president of the KNCV, I have seen how a society can be meaningful for its members. Through relevant events, sharing important information and by celebrating achievements together, members connect with each other and form a strong network. I believe that when EuChemS plays a connecting role between the member societies, this network will become even stronger. It will also enhance collaboration between societies and increase their visibility on the European level. Ideally, becoming an individual member of a national society should be perceived as also becoming a member of the larger European community. Isn't that an attractive perspective?

Floris Rutjes  
EuChemS President-Elect

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Fun Fact

The complete newsletter is available on [euchems.eu](http://euchems.eu)

### 50 years of EuChemS

The IYPT which has taken place during 2019 has been a most important year for EuChemS because it has allowed us to emphasize the importance of chemistry, and how it will provide solutions to the many challenges humankind will be facing. The year we are starting, 2020, is yet another opportunity for EuChemS to push home this message, since we will be commemorating our 50 years of existence.



The European Chemical Society as we now know it, previously the European Association of Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuChemS) started in Prague on 3 July 1970 as FECS, Federation of European Chemical Societies, in an inaugural meeting which was attended by 17 European chemical societies.

The idea of constituting such an umbrella organization started some years before involving, at the beginning, mainly representatives of West European chemical societies, but it soon extended to include East European countries. A "Steering Commit-

tee" was established which met alternately in East and West European cities and its members were dedicated to promoting international cooperation and to building the image of European Chemistry which is still part of the mission of today's EuChemS.

The main activities of FECS had to do with the professional aspects, within the Working Parties on Professional Affairs and Chemical Education, together with eight Working Parties dealing with different aspects of the chemical sciences, namely Analytical Chemistry, Food Chemistry, Organometallic Chemistry, Chemistry and the Environment, History of Chemistry, Electrochemistry, Chemistry and the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage and Computational Chemistry. It is a real tribute to the foresight of our predecessors that many of these topics are still covered by our Professional Networks today.

The FECS Lectures were introduced in 1980, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Federation in 1980, and already around 1985 FECS set up a Code of Conduct already anticipating even at that stage the importance of research integrity.

On 14 October 2004 in their General Assembly in Bucharest, FECS adopted the EuChemS designation, (European Chemical and Molecular Sciences Association), decided to establish their head-quarters in Belgium and prepared a new constitution which was finally published in the Belgian Gazette on 28 April 2006. This constitution was signed by 29 chemical societies. Now, in 2020 EuChemS comprises 51 chemical societies and organisations from 33 different countries, representing around 150,000 chemists. It has grown to be what the founding organizations envisaged 50 years ago. So, we are more than pleased to commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout this year, without having lost any of the enthusiasm and dedication of the pioneers of this adventure, to whom we will always owe much gratitude.

Come and hear more at our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting in Prague on 3 July, 2020.

Pilar Goya  
EuChemS President

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## Personnel News

**Prof. Floris Rutjes** has served the scientific community as President of the Royal Netherlands Chemical Society (KNCV) and as Vice-Dean and Professor at Radboud University in the Netherlands. Representatives of EuChemS Member Societies and Supporting Members voted on 3 October 2019 during the General Assembly in Bucharest, Romania, for Professor Floris Rutjes to be the next President of EuChemS.

During his presentation at the General Assembly, Floris laid out his vision for the coming years and highlighted his wish to ensure EuChemS was even better known to its community, and ever more invaluable in today's Europe.

He will start as EuChemS President in January 2021 and in the meantime will serve as President-Elect as of January 2020.

**Prof. Ioannis Katsoyiannis** has started his term as an elected member of the EuChemS Executive Board on 1 January 2020. Katsoyiannis is currently assistant Professor at the Department of Chemistry at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

**Prof. Rinaldo Poli** has started his term as an elected member of the EuChemS Executive Board on 1 January 2020. Poli is currently Professor at the Institut National Polytechnique de Toulouse and Chairman of ECIRM 2020.

**Prof. Monika Jerigová** is the President of the Slovak Chemical Society. Since 2004, Jerigová has been focusing on secondary ion mass spectrometry for analyzing the chemical composition of different materials at the Comenius University of Bratislava.

**Prof. Peter R. Schreiner** is the President of the German Chemical Society. His Presidency began on 1 January 2020. Since 2002, Schreiner has been Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen (Germany).

## What can we expect for Chemistry from the new European Commission?

The new European Commission took up office on 1 December 2019. Chaired by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, 26 other commissioners were appointed by each member state to shape the continent until 2024.

As Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen chairs the executive and assign portfolios to the commissioners. In autumn 2019, EuChemS wrote an Open Letter to President von der Leyen on the need to revise the title of the portfolio for Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and include 'Research and Education'. We are glad that our request has been heard.

As Commissioner for 'Education, Research, Innovation and Youth', Mariya Gabriel's main tasks are structured along the European Research area, that she has yet to implement. Associating research with industrial policy is one of the challenges ahead regarding this process. In her answers to the European Parliament questionnaire, Mariya Gabriel expressed her will to revitalize and boost Europe's science lead.

***"Open science and open innovation are essentials policies to realize a true European Research area."***

– Answers to the European Parliament questionnaire, Mariya Gabriel

On a broader note, Mariya Gabriel supports the increase of the Erasmus+ programme funding: tripling the budget would further develop the inclusiveness of the Erasmus+ programme. Also concerning education, she works on the implementation of the Digital Education transformation plan. Although we live within the digital area, people in Europe are behind when it comes to digital education. Upgrading the Digital Education transformation programme can be done with a focus on the training teachers receive over the continent. Indeed, technology should be used to support their work, in order to transmit digital skills to younger generations. What is more, Mariya Gabriel is also a fervent advocate of gender equality. In the past, she launched the 'women in digital strategy' to combat gender stereotypes in digital and stimulates scientific, digital and engineering career paths for women. These efforts will be

maintained until 2024. Last, but not least, Mariya Gabriel is also in charge of the Joint Research Center (JRC), the in-house scientific service of the European Commission. Mariya Gabriel's mission takes part within the framework of Open Science. Through a digital single market, Open Science aims 'make research more open, global, collaborative, creative and closer to society' (read Open Science Policy here).

Overall, the European Green Deal is one of the priorities of the Commission for 2019-24, along with the promotion of the European way of life, a stronger Europe in the world, a new push for European democracy, an economy that works with people and a Europe fit for the digital age. During her first speech as the new Commission President at the global climate conference COP25 in Madrid, Spain, Ursula von der Leyen relaunched discussions on budget matters for research. To reach the goal of climate neutrality in the framework of a European Green Deal, €1 trillion of investment over the next ten years should be unleashed to achieve netzero greenhouse gas emissions on the continent by 2050. It will cover many policies areas, from energy to biodiversity.

Laura Jousset  
EuChemS Science Communication & Policy officer

## 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.

Editorial Board:

Pilar Goya, Nineta Hrastelj (Chair), Laura Jousset (Coordinator), Ioannis Katsoyannis, Maximilian Menche, Floris Rutjes, Karin Schmitz, Emmanuel Sinagra, Cristina Todasca.

Website: [euchems.eu](http://euchems.eu)